

## Process Drama as a Medium of Creative Teaching and Learning in EFL Classroom

### Abstract

Drama is an art form, a practical activity, and an intellectual discipline highly accessible to young people. In education, it is a mode of learning that challenges students to make meaning of their world. Through students' active identification with imagined roles and situations in drama, they can learn to explore issues, events and relationships. In drama students draw on their knowledge and experience of the real world.

Drama has the capacity to move and change both participants and audiences and to affirm and challenge values, cultures and identities

Drama can develop students' artistic and creative skills and humanize learning by providing lifelike learning contexts in a classroom setting that values active participation in a non-threatening, supportive environment. Drama empowers students to understand and influence their world through exploring roles and situations and develops students' non-verbal and verbal, individual and group communication skills. It develops students' intellectual, social, physical, emotional and moral domains through learning that engages their thoughts, feelings, bodies and actions.

In the paper I will demonstrate process drama and how it may be used as a creative medium of teaching English as a foreign language.

**Key words:** *Drama, EFL (English as a foreign language), tension, social context, role, momentum, activities, communication*

## **Introduction**

Drama is a commonly used method in teaching foreign languages in Great Britain and the USA but it is still not very popular in Polish schools. It develops students' communication skills and improves communicative competence. Language is a living form and the use of drama techniques allows it to be exercised in situations, which effectively mirror real life. Many students are reluctant to speak a foreign language in situations where error or lack of knowledge may cause embarrassment and the great strength of drama is its ability to give a situation the dynamic interpersonal momentum that requires participants to respond.

Language teaching can be described as the practical application of psycholinguistic theories in methods and activities aiming at language learning.

Stern (1983, p 375), believes that students' previous language learning experiences, attitudes towards the target language, motivation and personality affect the learning process. Following a study carried out at California University Stern concluded that drama encourages operation of certain psychological factors which improve communication; heightened self-esteem, motivation and spontaneity; increased capacity for empathy and lowered sensitivity to rejection. Affective factors appear to be also important in Gardner and Lambert's research (1972), which showed a significant correlation between affective factors (personality, socialisation, motivation and attitude) and proficiency.

Krashen in his "affective filter hypothesis" (1982 p32), supports the view that students' motivation, a low anxiety level and self-confidence facilitate language acquisition. It appears then that the use of drama can go some way towards fulfilling these psychological needs (security, sense of belonging, self-esteem and confidence) because it takes into account students' personalities. Successful drama takes place in a non-threatening environment, involves motivation, high self-esteem, personalisation and the interaction of students in meaningful activities.

English, as other languages, is not just words, structures and idioms; it is a lively, dramatic and versatile means of communication. Teaching a foreign language is a process of interaction and communication between student and teacher, which reflects their various emotional and intellectual states. Learning English requires, however, more than language input; students need real-life practice. The fact that drama helps to bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world makes drama one of the most flexible, effective and enjoyable ways of teaching.

## **Importance of human interaction in language learning**

A great deal of language learning takes place through relatively informal, unplanned imitation and use in actual communication situations. Spontaneous human interaction involves intention, authenticity and unpredictability. In this way, the conversation resembles situations in which children acquire their native language in unfamiliar situations.

Stern also supports the notion that language development occurs through creative, active language use – “its continuing modifications” (Stern, 1983 p. 20), and original combinations when students attempt to express thoughts and feelings in situations which require human interaction. In order to acquire a language, students need not only to be surrounded by a rich language; they also need to use it in order to express their personal intentions and attitudes to other people.

Drama is an ideal teaching medium because it provides varied opportunities for learners to use a language in an exciting way, thus increasing the vocabulary and developing interest in oral communication otherwise scarcely touched upon in normal everyday teaching.

Successful communication is dependent on attentiveness and involvement in the discourse by all participants. Attentiveness and involvement facilitate acquisition by allowing the input to penetrate. Successful learning, then, becomes a positive experience triggering students’ interest and motivation during the lesson.

In an attempt to explain how drama promotes language development Byron (1986:116) gives the following figure from Wilson and Cockcroft (p 19):

- a) New Context Created
- b) New Roles Established
- c) New Relationships in Operation
- d) New Language Demands Made
- e) Language Demands Tackled
- f) Language Development

Drama brings into class real life situations that are not usually provided by course books. When students are introduced into these new contexts they also become immediately appointed to new life- roles. These roles in turn reorientate students’ relationships with their peers and the teacher. In order to cope with new settings or contexts, roles and relationships, students feel the urge to use the appropriate language and their communicative skills. As during the activities the focus is on the nature of the role or the situation, the anxiety of making mistakes is removed from students and they become more confident. Drama forces them to use language for a real purpose (to convince, demand, advise, explain, threaten, seek help), so they need to speak more. An increase in student talk improves flu-

ency in manipulating the foreign language and raises accuracy awareness as well. This procedure brings language development.

Drama activities raise the need for language use. It is a matter of defending oneself, explaining or expressing feelings and thoughts; not just practising phrasal verbs and conditionals. In role-plays, simulations and improvisations, communication becomes important and unavoidable. Students have to explain, negotiate or defend their roles through interaction, building the language they use on each other's arguments. So there is a sense of continuity and sharing of ideas. Learners also have the opportunity to activate their past knowledge, practise newly learned forms and expand their linguistic abilities. That is because drama can motivate students to use and experiment with the already acquired language. Expansion and variation of roles and relationships lead to expansion and variation in language. Drama increases the range, fluency and effectiveness of speech.

### **Process drama in EFL**

Process drama involves creating and articulating an improvised dramatic event. Participants are required to generate, manipulate and transform the elements of the process. They control significant aspects of the event because they simultaneously experience it and create it. They also evaluate what is happening and make connections to the real world and to their own lives. Drama demands perception, imagination, speculation and interpretation from the participants, and exercises their cognitive, linguistic and social capacities, even when they are using their native language.

In the L2 classroom the key to the effectiveness lies in the creation of an immediate and unpredictable social context. All encounters among the participants within this fictional context will promote meaningful and purposeful language use. Once a dramatic world begins to grow, the usual classroom context is replaced by a new context, roles and relationships among students and also between the students and teachers. The patterns of communication and interaction in the classroom are fundamentally altered, generating possibilities of social, personal, and linguistic development. The focus is on the interactions and encounters among the participants, rather than on the accuracy of their speech. Instead, fluency springs from the motivation to communicate within the dramatic situation and from the emphasis on meaning. Students involved in the rich variety of speech events that drama promotes draw on all their linguistic and paralinguistic resources as they struggle to communicate. Because the talk that arises in drama is embedded in context, it is purposeful and essentially generative.

Traditional classroom discourse even when conducted in students' native tongue, rarely offers opportunities for the exploration of a range of complex language functions, since these functions arise from personal, sustained, and intensive encounters. The teacher's functions include sustaining intensive interactions with students and structuring complex and authentic language environments.

For the teacher wishing to use process drama, there are a number of implications that have to be accepted in the classroom:

1. language is not only a cognitive activity, but also an intense social and personal endeavour and cultural adventure
2. Both students and teachers must be prepared to take risks and experiment within the functioning speech ;
3. The teacher can no longer presume to dominate the learning, and should be prepared to function in a variety of ways, including taking a role and being ready to empower the student

We need to remember that the way in which drama begins is critical in the development of successful follow-up activities. The contexts chosen will determine the authenticity of the drama and thus influence students' involvement levels. Carefully selecting a wide range of roles for students is also important because it allows the students to explore the drama world and helps them to go beyond the restricted classroom roles they usually inhabit. "Teacher in role" is a unique and effective strategy for launching process drama. With this strategy, the teacher can become involved in the activity, challenge the students with authentic questions, yet retain some control in developing the work. Questioning is another useful strategy available to the teacher to help set up the parameters of the fictional world.

While negotiating the roles, scenes and meanings, participants arrive at a deeper understanding of the drama. When the above elements are present, dramatic tension will arise. This tension will promote the intellectual and emotional engagement of students and increase the power of the drama. Last but not least, it is critical to allow students to reflect upon what happened because reflection enables them to become aware of the learning they have achieved. In the following section we will discuss each of these elements in detail and how they can be implemented effectively.

## **Introducing process drama**

When drama activities such as role-plays or scenarios are introduced to students, the teacher typically sets the assignment, gives instructions, suggests roles, and monitors the results. The task of setting up a sequence of episodes in process drama is rather more complex. Because the work requires structure and yet allows for

spontaneous responses as it develops over time, it is essential to find a starting point that intrigues and involves students. This starting point should rapidly enlist students' language and imagination in creating the fictional world that will emerge through drama.

There are a variety of effective ways of launching a drama sequence and generating a fruitful context.. Sometimes students are asked to invent some characters, their names, personalities and family background within a certain context. Students take responsibility and the fact that the imaginary people are their own creation keep them engaged in the more challenging episodes of any drama. Studies indicate that a degree of control over the situation generated from a student group will produce optimum results for L2 learners in listening and speaking (Johnson, 1988). Another way of achieving a similar result might be to show students a number of photographs and have them use these images as a basis for invention. Pictorial representations are familiar in L2 teaching. They help students build vocabulary by naming and describing items, answering questions or developing a story.

Useful starting points for drama occur in all kinds of sources. Poems, myths, legends, novels, and short stories will provide ideas and issues, especially if these texts involve people who have to make decisions or solve problems. These sources as well as plots from classic drama can be used as "pre-texts", which will provide "atmosphere, situations, tensions, tasks and dilemmas" (O'Neill, 1995, p. 37). Headlines or letters in a daily newspaper, works of literature chosen from the target language, as well as the real-life experiences of the participants may provide authentic themes for drama work.

The kind of starting-point that is chosen and the way it evolves will depend on the age of students, their competence in the target language, and the teacher's learning objectives.

## **Contexts**

The contexts that are chosen for drama may include serious "realistic" situations, for example, lost properties, lost pets, famous people or fashion and environmental concerns; contexts familiar to students like school trips; and even subjects that seem totally fantastic, such as talking animals or witches on a TV show or the trial of the Golden Lock. The particular choice of context will be determined by students' social skills and cultural understanding as much as by their language ability. Younger students are likely to respond easily and immediately to the "make believe" offered by process drama. Adolescents may need a realistic approach in order to overcome negative attitudes and help them perceive the usefulness of drama. Once

they have adjusted to an unfamiliar method, it will be possible to extend the range of contexts to include more imaginative approaches. Initially, adults may feel more secure in a context that is playful rather than serious, so that they feel free to take risks and make mistakes. 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 “correct” speech promotes confidence and fluency.

## **Roles**

### **Individual Roles**

All kinds of dramatic activity, from the professional performance on stage to a play in which the child is engaged, is a direct result of our human capacity to manipulate and transform the roles we inhabit (O’Neill, 1995). Through drama we can transcend our limited and restrictive social roles and discover new aspects of our personality. In L2 teaching, the initial purpose of endowing students with different roles will be to provide them with fresh linguistic possibilities. In a typical teacher-controlled role-play, these roles are likely to be restricted by the teacher’s didactic purposes. However, even if the roles available to students are primarily functional, they may offer some small degree of self-transcendence – something that goes beyond the here and now of the real classroom situation.

For Heathcote, one of the most important aspects of taking on a role is its spontaneity (Johnson & O’Neill, 1984). It is this quality that constantly surprises individuals into the discovery of their own competences. She claims that her purpose in drama is to release students into a new awareness of what they already know but do not realise they know. Moreno, a pioneer in the use of role-play in therapy, emphasised the importance of spontaneity in distinguishing two major manifestations of a role. The first was “role-taking”, the enactment of a situation in a totally predetermined manner. Many exercises in L2 teaching fall into this category. Moreno’s second category was “role creating”, which demands both creativity and spontaneity in responding appropriately to the given circumstances (Moreno, 1959). This spontaneity is also central to the adoption of roles in process drama.

It is possible for the L2 teacher to give students the widest range of possible opportunities for language use by endowing them with carefully chosen roles that go far beyond their usual restricted classroom roles. The most useful roles will be those that permit students to ask and answer questions, to solve problems, to offer both information and opinions, to argue and persuade, and generally to fulfil the widest range of language functions.

### Group Roles

One of the ways in which process drama differs from more conventional kinds of improvisation and role-play is in the kinds of roles available to students. In simple role-plays students are likely to be given a limited individual role, for example, a dissatisfied customer making a complaint or a tourist asking for directions. Attitudes are strictly determined and functionally adapted to the situation. In the SI approach, (Di Pietro, 1987a) a group of students will take responsibility during the rehearsal phase for anticipating and preparing for an interaction with a particular role. In contrast, in process drama students are likely to be initially endowed with a kind of group or generic role; that is, they all begin the drama as the same type of person. They are defined, at least at first, by their roles as members of a particular group involved in a special enterprise or circumstance, holding a particular attitude or with a specific task to perform. Students work in groups to “shape” this role further through discussion and activities. The role each group creates gradually differs from those generated by other groups in characteristics, personal background, talents, attitudes to society, experience in the past, perspectives toward future and consequences in life as the drama unfolds. This group role provides tremendous support for L2 students to overcome insecurities as well as their incompetence in using the target language at this initial stage of making drama.

Every individual response from members of the group belongs, in a sense, to everyone who is part of that group. Less competent students can still be part of the activity without their lack of skill and confidence. For students who are unfamiliar with this way of working, a group role provides an initial perspective on the unfolding situation, and each individual can join at the level of their own linguistic competence. Their contribution of even a single word or a simple phrase will make them part of the event, and will signal their entitlement to bring their ideas to the developing action.

When students are in role in this way they are not required to “act”, like an actor on stage, but instead to adopt particular attitudes and perspectives and respond appropriately. As they do so, they are at the same time an audience to the performance of their peers and the teacher as they engage in the drama. This demands a level of listening and comprehension from the participants as they adapt their input to what has already been said. As Heathcote emphasises, one cannot force people to adopt a commitment to a particular point of view, but if they are put in a position to respond, they begin to hold a point of view because they can see that it has power (Johnson & O’Neill, 1984). The teacher’s language, especially if the teacher is “in role”, will provide both a model and support for their efforts.



## **Teacher in role**

“Teacher in role” is one of the most effective ways of beginning process drama. It is a hallmark of the process and clearly distinguishes it from other more limited approaches. In this way the willingness of teachers to enter and build the fictional world is a powerful means of altering the atmosphere, relationships and balances of power in the classroom, since it immediately changes the function of the teacher within the lesson. In more traditional creative drama lessons, the teacher typically remains as an external facilitator, a side coach, a director or a “loving ally”, rather than working within the drama in role. “Teacher in role “ is closely identified with the work of Dorothy Heathcote, who was the first to develop the strategy systematically.

The initial purpose of taking on a role is not to give a display of acting, but to invite students to enter and begin to create the fictional world. When the teacher takes on a role in the interaction, it is an act of conscious self-preservation, and one that invites students to respond actively, to join in and extend or transform what is happening. It sends out signals to students that the activity is regarded seriously by the teacher, and that input from both the teacher and students is equally valid. For Gavin Bolton, teacher in role is the most important and subtle strategy in the teacher’s drama repertoire. It is both a strategy for learning and a significant principle of teaching, which uniquely inverts the assumptions underlying the traditional pedagogical context. The power relationship between pupils and teacher is tacitly perceived as negotiable.

The advantages of working in role for the teacher are manifold. This strategy makes it possible for the teacher to establish the imaginary situation briefly and economically, without lengthy explanations and assigning of parts, model appropriate behaviour and language, maintain the dramatic tension and challenge to support the students from within the fictional situation. Criteria of possibility are set up and appropriate conventions of language and behaviour are seen in action. Through the use of “teacher in role” it is possible to build the participants together as a group, engage them immediately in the dramatic action, and manipulate the language. The teacher is never merely “acting” or joining in on equal terms with the group. That would be to overlook the key educational and structural aspects of the strategy. The teacher in role has a different task which is to bring students into active participation in the event.

The possible functions of the teacher are multiplied by using teacher in role. Whether in the first or second language classroom, this complex approach operates to focus the attention of the participants, harness their feelings of ambivalence and vulnerability, unite them in contemplation and engage them in action. The role

presented by the teacher is available to be “read” or interpreted, and the participants are immediately caught in a web of contemplation, speculation and anticipation. They are drawn together in attending to and building the event, as they seek for clues to the kind of fictional world that is emerging and their place within it. Students are challenged to make sense of what they hear and see, to become aware of their responses and to use these responses as an impetus to action. They are invited not only to enter the dramatic world but to transform it; not merely to take on roles but to create and transcend them.

A rehearsal phase can be built in as part of the action. All students can be involved in the situation at once, for example where all students consult about the best way to find the lost dog or to persuade the obstructive official. The situation becomes increasingly authentic, yet still occurring in, as Heathcote calls, a lucid “no penalty” area (Johnson & O’Neill, 1984, p.165). It is the role, not the teacher, who responds to any communication or opposition from the class, so both teacher and students are protected by the fictional nature of the event.

## **Tension**

Another key characteristic of process drama, and one that distinguishes it from simple role-plays, is that at its most effective it operates through the tension generated within the situation. Tension has the dictionary definition of “mental excitement”, and has been defined by drama educators in the following ways:

1. Morgan and Saxton (1987) make it clear that “mental excitement is fundamental to intellectual and emotional engagement, not only as a stimulus, but as the bonding agent that sustains involvement in the dramatic task” (p. 3).
2. The tension of the moment in every interaction, as Di Pietro (1987a) recognised, evokes language and helps it to be retained.

Tension is a key quality in drama, whether improvised or scripted, although it has not always been recognised as such. Too often in theatre and drama, the much cruder notion of “conflict” is seen as the dynamic force in drama. Viola Spolin, the author of the immensely influential “Improvisation for the Theatre,” identifies the weakness of this view when she defines conflict as a “device for generating stage energy” (Spolin, 1963, p. 379). Tension, on the other hand, is an essential structural principle in generating a dramatic world. Momentum can only develop if a state of tension is created that provides dynamics for the action. Tension is an essential aesthetic element, closely linked with such qualities as time and rhythm. It exists between the situation as it appears at any moment and the complete action. Tension can be created in the theatre by the ignorance of the characters and the knowledge

of the audience about elements of the action. Tension can be created by the struggle between the intentions of one role and another. Tension is never merely suspense, waiting for something to happen, but it implies both pressure and resistance. It arises as much from what is known as from what is unknown. The students wishing to rescue the street children in our example described earlier are in no doubt that the official will oppose their plans. The tension arises as they struggle to overcome obstacles to their plans. It comes from within the situation. It is a result not only of what is already apprehended but of what is anticipated. Dramatic tension of this kind keeps any play, game or dramatic interaction alive.

Traditional language exercises are typically set up in order to remove any tension so that repetition and eventually accuracy will occur. Their value lies in the fact that they isolate a particular factor and allow attention to be focused on it. As Heathcote puts it, “when drama is exercise-driven, the natural discoveries that come from emotional involvement cannot arise”(Johnson & O’Neill, 1984, p. 98).

How does tension arise in drama? Some of the most effective dramas are evoked by the teacher asking questions or setting a problem for students. Effective questioning will be the teacher’s most important tool, both at the beginning of the drama, and at critical moments within the interactions. Encounters with the teacher in role are also to produce tension, particularly if the role presented appears ambiguous, obstructive or untrustworthy. For students, interpreting the possible intentions of such a role and responding appropriately is a source of immediate tension within the group.

Different levels of tension will operate depending on the context and the teacher’s purposes, but without this essential dramatic and interactional element the drama is unlikely to develop effectively. Tension may arise from direct confrontation, as a way of harnessing the energy or resistance of the class; it may appear more subtly as a dilemma, a veiled threat, pressure posed by an outside agency, or by such factors as time pressure which demands a rapid response. At times, such tensions may reveal immediately; at others they may emerge as the drama develops and the issues on stage become clear. As the drama proceeds, one tension may replace another.

## **Negotiation**

In *Learning Through Drama* by McGregor, Tate, and Robinson (1977), drama was defined as the negotiation of meaning. Drama cannot happen without negotiation between the teacher and class and among students. Similarly, language use is regarded by Widdowson (1990) as essentially a matter of negotiating meaning. In linguistics,

negotiation is seen as a higher level skill, yet students with the lowest level of communication skills can negotiate if there is an opportunity and motivation (Lantolf & Khanji, 1982). As Heathcote puts it, the whole negotiation of a role involves “delicate linguistics,” as well as the ability to use gestures and space significantly (Johnson & O’Neill, 1984). Every phase of the drama will require negotiation, although it is likely to be particularly evident at the beginning of the process, as students and teachers seek to define the parameters of the emerging fictional world.

Negotiation will also occur among students as they work in smaller groups, prepare for dramatic activity or rehearse an item for presentation to the class. These negotiations will challenge their social skills as well as their linguistic capacities, but these demands are an essential justification for using this approach.

### **Non-verbal activities**

Although the purpose of using drama in the L2 classroom is to generate language, the inclusion of non-verbal episodes within the process can be very valuable. Di Pietro (1983) noted that second language teaching methods make little effort to address gestural communication and the kind of non-verbal episodes than can easily be incorporated into the drama. Perhaps the most useful non-verbal technique in process drama is “tableau”, “still picture,” or “freeze frame.” Working in small groups students prepare an image of some kind and present it to the rest of the class, as, for example, “pictures” created by students to show the lives of poor children. These images are created and interpreted in order to provide information, gain insight, or acquire understanding about a particular situation. The selective use of a tableau within process drama releases students from the demands of an immediate linguistic response, slows down the action, requires co-operation and composition, embodies understanding, and allows a level of abstraction. For example, creating a tableau or statue commemorating poor children can help participants recollect their understanding about such a theme without verbal expressions and arrive at a conclusion of their own at the end of the series of episodes. This is also the most powerful use of tableau: to inspire reflection within or beyond the drama.

Mime or pantomime is a procedure used by most L2 teachers. It is usually performed individually, and this makes it more suitable for younger students who may not be inhibited by such exposure. Again, working in mime releases students from the constraints of language. In other words, mime is an alternative for L2 learners at lower competence levels to express their thoughts with their body and not in the language that they are not yet comfortable with. The mimes they produce demand an economy of expression and, like tableaux, develop an awareness of the

significance of spatial representation. Without the help of verbal expressions, students need to use their physical movements very carefully to get their ideas across without causing any misunderstanding or ambiguity. Both techniques provide opportunities for building vocabulary, developing roles, providing information, testing understanding and promoting reflection.

It is important that non-verbal approaches do not turn into mere "guessing games," where the group expends its energy on trying to decipher what is happening in the tableau or mime, rather than interrogating the images or sequences of gestures for the meaning they contain.

## **Questioning**

Teachers spend a large proportion of their time asking questions of their students. Much of the time, however, these questions are not "authentic" in that the teacher already knows the answer and is merely checking students' knowledge. Questioning in drama works differently. Often it is the teacher's questions that help to give students a sense of their roles and establish the parameters of the fictional world. The teacher is dependent upon students' answers in order to move the drama forward. As Morgan and Saxton (1987) put it, "questions are first and foremost an opportunity for clarifying and testing out meaning and understanding" (p. 83).

Skilful questioning within the drama process 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. Very often official questions are an important element in creating tension, and this is one of the most useful functions of questions. Drama topics or roles that allow the students themselves to ask questions are especially useful in giving them a sense of control and ownership of the work. The teacher's questioning is likely to be particularly significant during the reflective phase of the lesson, but throughout the drama it will always be more important to generate significant questions than to demand right answers.

## **Reflection**

Reflection on what has happened in the lesson is a key way of eliciting trust and developing commitment to the process (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984). For Heathcote, the explicit educational aim of her work in drama is always to build a reflective and

contemplative attitude in the participants. It is only in recent years that Heathcote's emphasis on learning and reflection, the immediacy and significance of the experience, and its essential group nature have become common currency among drama teachers.

Reflection is a way of making students aware of the learning that has taken place and demonstrating the significance of their achievements, both socially and linguistically. These may not always be obvious, as the energy and enjoyment of the process may mask genuine growth in fluency and confidence. Where the drama has not been immediately successful, reflection can save a situation from degenerating still further. It will allow the teacher to clarify objectives, reframe tasks, invite students' questions and take steps to repair students' self-esteem. Reflection serves a variety of purposes. It can be used to review progress, prepare for the next stage of the drama, discover students' thoughts and feelings about the content of the work, resolve problems, and evaluate skills. Discussion of such topics needs to be skilfully handled. Sometimes the most effective discussions can take place inside the drama, and reflection does not always need to be carried out discursively. For example, reflection of students' feelings as they work through the structure could be achieved by adding a further phase to the lesson in which the teacher in role as a journalist questions them in their language about their experiences. The sole purpose of this kind of role is to engage students in reflective talk about their responses within the drama. To reflect non-verbally on the whole theme of the work, the class might be asked to work in small groups and create a "statue" of street children, to be set up in a place where it might help to remind the public of the ordeal they had overcome in their lives.

Reflection can be achieved through extending the drama into other activities and other expressive modes. Heathcote uses the energy of non-dramatic activities such as writing, drawing and map-making to enrich and deepen the quality of reflection on the dramatic experience. Writing in role is a very motivating task, since students have a great deal to draw on. Letters, diaries, drawings, maps, plans, newspaper headlines, official reports, obituaries, etc. may all be used to extend their involvement in the drama, deepen their responses and offer a variety of further language opportunities, both formal and informal.

Probably the most frequent use of reflection in the L2 classroom is to comment on and correct students' linguistic errors. This is obviously a priority for L2 teachers, but an over-emphasis on these evaluative aspects may have a negative effect on students; their involvement in the work. Such comments need to be handled positively by focusing on what students have achieved. Suggestions for alternative idioms or vocabulary to improve communication can be solicited from the rest of the class.

## **Summary**

In this paper I have considered some of the key elements in creating effective process drama. To use process drama successfully in the L2 classroom the teacher needs to be able to undertake the following functions:

- Find an effective starting point for the drama and, if necessary, initiate the drama in role.
- Choose themes and topics appropriate for the social and linguistic abilities of students.
- Introduce a variety of roles in order to familiarise students with a wide range of language functions.
- Understand and foster the operation of tension in the dramatic situation so that encounters continue to be unpredictable and authentic.
- Handle the class as a whole group as well as organise students into pairs and small groups.
- Release students from the constraints of language and provide them with fresh opportunities by incorporating non-verbal activities in the process.
- Negotiate the development of the drama with students and encourage similar positive interactions among students.
- Use a variety of forms of questioning to promote involvement, support students' contributions and challenge superficial or inadequate responses.
- Reflect on the experiences, both in discussion and through the use of other modes of expression.
- Extend the drama experience beyond the limits of the classroom by making connections with society and with students' own lives.

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