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Process Drama: A Medium for Creating a Hospitable Space for Learning through
Reverent Listening

by

Kim Anthony

A THESIS

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The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
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Process Drama: A Medium for Creating a Hospitable Space for Learning through
Reverent Listening

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University of Nebraska, 2013

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This thesis explores how Process Drama, as pedagogy, can invite into educational discourse a conversation about the roles of hospitality and reverence in the classroom through reverent listening to self, others and context. It can become a medium for holistic learning in the drama classroom and in learning situations of all kinds. Process Drama, as an enactment of reverent listening, creates a space for theater to facilitate the engagement of all participants, creating a learningful experience that can transcend barriers of race and social economic status brought by the invited and uninvited learner. Reverent listening and hospitality become the catalyst through which Process Drama can become a revered and necessary means for learning. The truly reverent classroom is where students can take on the mantle of the expert (Bolton & Heathcote, 1995) giving them the language and appetite for learning, engaging them in the necessity for reverent listening.

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Dedication

To my beloved children, Owen and Shannon and to the hundreds of other young minds that have graced my classroom and stage. Thank you for inviting me to play on the stage of your lives and for the cocreation of unbounded possibilities.

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Preface

A student searching, looking, hoping squeezing
 Into his desk
 Hoping this class will be different
 “SHE will make it so,”
 Said by the THEY
 Who have played here before.

SHE extends her hand and asks me to stand
 Asks me how I am
 Plays with me,
 Invites me to play a role
 On the stage of my life
 Inviting me to be
 Me
 Through Shakespeare and Angelo

The intention for this body of work is a humble effort to bring together two subjects that have shaped me as an educator and as a person. I begin my exploration of the complex subjects reverent listening and Process Drama by attempting to address the negative aspects of consumerism present in education through the work of David Labaree and his book *How to Succeed in School Without Really Learning* (1997). As a secondary Theater and English teacher for over 16 years, I have attempted through Process Drama to combat the inhospitality brought by testing practices, tests that have abused the great works of many authors like Maya Angelo, resulting not in a deeper appreciation of the author and the power of the written word but instead led to the marginalization of the invited and uninvited learner. Through the development of this writing, it is not my intention to reject the need for standardized curriculum or a scientific system that mandates a way for teachers to negotiate learning. However, since the inception of the policies of *No Child Left Behind* (2002) over ten years ago, I began to feel an intense pressure to conform to the “will” of the mandated curriculum. The need to meet state and

federal testing standards resulted in my authentic learning environment wilting and leaving in its place an inhospitable learning environment. Progressively over the years, I noticed in my own classroom, students becoming the product I sought so hard to avoid and a glaring reminder that my normally dynamic, engaging lessons had become efforts to “just get the required standards done.” I wanted to find meaning and devise a way to work within the realm of testing and accountability curriculum without killing the reason I strive to educate students and their own impulses to learn. So I began, with the help of Dr. Margaret Macintyre Latta, to begin to search for the good in teaching and bring back to my classroom the balance needed for authentic education.

The concept of the classroom as home and home as the classroom stems from a reaction to classrooms being robbed of the hospitality of the home giving way to the regiment of test scores, collection of data, and a one-size fits all curriculum that negates the relationship of outside factors such as levels of wealth, cognitive stimuli, and health (Sadovnik, 2008). For example, Martin (2002) in the forward of *Cultural Miseducation: In Search of a Democratic Solution* asserts that today’s schools are under incredible pressure to become a less democratic environment and more focused on the seductive quick fixes high-stakes testing and the enactment of a curriculum that reflects teachers as masters, not as guides. Acknowledging this practice is not much different from the days of John Dewey, she moves beyond the Deweyan notion of *Democracy in Education* (1916) and attempts to negotiate a higher understanding of education through focusing on the students’ individual progression and development. She states the problem as a tendency to

settle for the goal of one education for all opens the door to a compulsory curriculum, turns dependency into a liability, and does grave injustice to

succeeding generations by failing to pass down to them large portions of the cultures accumulated wealth” and contends that “democratic citizenship does not require one curriculum for all. (Martin, 2002, pp. 131-133)

It is in this realm of understanding, this focus on the individual and a chance for cocreation of curriculum, that I find the good in good teaching and not strictly in the preparation of a citizen in a democratic society through scripted play.

Many define the moral function of public education as an attempt to explain whom the public is, and who it is within and in response to the needs and demands of the public, i.e., the students and the communities they belong, that the society and all the components of a society can exist. The underlying message to teachers is that their job is to prepare students to move in fully to their citizenship, where they engage in self-education while also contributing to the education of their fellow citizens. In my observations, this often manifests into students becoming mere files to be filled and boxes to be checked off. Consumerism upstages authentic acts of learning, with students becoming extras rather than leads within their own learning situations. Classrooms become a competitive game with sterile achievement goals as the prize, lifting up a few savvy consumers rather than the lifting up of everyone’s achievement possibilities. Day (2004) further defines the current state of education as problematic “with its high-stakes testing, commercializing of the public learning arena, one-size fits all, state-imposed curricular framework and teaching to the test” (p. 3). Aoki (1992) adds that in the “black box view of teaching” we forget the “humanness that lies at the core of teaching” (p. 24). It is through the navigating of these thoughts that I pushed on and searched for a realm of understanding for me to personalize my thinking and teaching. Where could hospitable

elements be found in the curriculum and who were the uninvited learners displaced by this style of teaching?

Building upon this idea, this body of work examines hospitality; an ancient tradition and recent area of interest developed in the writings of Jim Garrison and A.G. Rud in a collection of edited essays, “The Educational Conversation: Closing the Gap” (1995), and continues to be defined in reverent teaching through listening explored in *Teaching with Reverence* (Rud & Garrison, 2012). By practicing hospitality in the classroom, through the cultivation of relationships between teacher and student, students with each other and the use of reverent listening, a space is created in preparation for the uninvited learner. Learning is impeded when there is little or no concern about the *relational* or aesthetic aspects of teaching. As I have experienced, this is what the student clings to, takes away from the involvement of his or her education; what they can see, hear, smell, touch, or taste. When one negates the student-teacher relationship, when teaching relationships are driven by assessment and when external sources cloud the connection between the primary components of learning, a major disconnect takes place.

Finally, this body of work explores theater and the possibility for the enactment of reverent listening through Process Drama. My passion for the arts over the years has manifested into successful theater programs, performances, and rich aesthetic learning experiences in classrooms interconnecting different states, religions, and cultural backgrounds. I use my love of theater to negotiate the possibilities that lies in working within this unique realm of learning and aesthetic play to fuel a passion for performance for the richer development of my students as fuller, richer, human beings.

This writing may be relevant to the reader due to the unique nature of theater and the possibility of theater as something to be revered as necessary medium for learning. By teachers inviting students to “take on the mantle of the expert” within the fiction of the drama, it allows the teacher to ask questions, shape the lesson, and check and model student understanding. This adds an extra dimension to the teaching—not a separate less valuable afterthought to the curriculum. Theater as I have known it, strives to build upon teaching pedagogies that already exist, weaving together new ways and possibilities in thinking that can inspire and hold the interest of students at any grade level, all while being guided by the curriculum. In this way, the use of reverent listening creates a space for theater to become revered as necessary medium through which learning can be facilitated.

However, Process Drama is not an easy fix or teaching pedagogy that can be mass-produced and squeezed into a ready-made cache’ of good teaching practices. This is where Process Drama and hospitality spark a common point, through it’s weaving of students, curriculum and the possibility for teachers to consider their approach and navigation of the curriculum in the classroom. To enact this, teachers are invited to observe and assess their students to help develop curriculum that bridges to other subjects in hope of success in the classroom. Through the combination of creating a hospitable space for learning through the theories of Process Drama, using reverent listening to make theater something to be revered as necessary for learning, students are offered an educational experience that casts them in an appropriate role, emphasizing *who* is being taught not *what* is being taught. Inviting students into play with theater, as a medium for learning is at the core of what I have taught. I invite them to stand, to extend their hand,

take center stage in their own education and obtain a sense of what it means to be a fully realized human being.

Chapter 1

Introduction: Reverence for the Theater Classroom

“Alex, you are a classic curmudgeon!” Those lines from the play, *The Nerd* by Larry Shue (1989), spoken by me almost 25 years ago still resonates in my mind. The feeling of utter awe and wonder that I could be transported and transport an audience to an alternative reality or lead them to make insights was an incredible sensation for a 16 year old girl from an economically challenged divorced household. Statistically, I was on track to be a single mother drop out with little to no chance of attending a four-year college, let alone have a successful career as an educator and carry a 4.0 in graduate school. Through theatrical opportunity, I began my career as an actress but more importantly, I began to gather an awareness of how dramatic play could alter the perception of myself and give direction to my educational experience.

Was it the product I was producing on stage or was it the process of discovering who I was as a person that gave me an “enduring passion for learning, an appreciation for beauty, a respecting silence, and a caring for others” (Rud & Garrison, 2012, p. 1), that shapes how I teach and my meaning making to this day? These deliberations came to intrigue me and invited me to grapple with possibilities I experienced through drama instruction. My reflections stir images of drama instruction aiding in the creation of a space of hospitable learning, enacted through reverent listening to self, others and context. It is through this medium, I can explore how hospitality and reverence become a catalyst for authentic learning experiences in the acting classroom and in learning situations of all kinds.

My journey as a theater educator began with a burning desire to share my love of acting and the creation of art that is unique through the theatrical experience. After years of acting, directing, advocating tirelessly keeping theater programs afloat, and assisting in the infusing of dramatic play into other curricular areas, I began to see a startling trend. I was aware of the common practices of other classrooms reflecting the current state of education as an emphasis of “only imparting skills and knowledge” (Rud & Garrison, 2012) but terrifying was the realization that this trend was present in my own classroom. Students were manifesting into the “product” I most feared and a reflection of the marketplace transaction of tests and measurability became evident in their “purpose of play.”

During performance finals in my acting class, the words of William Shakespeare rang prophetic as a talented young man in my acting class recited, “The mirror up to nature: to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure” (Shakespeare, 1992, Hamlet Act 3, scene 2, 20-24). As he recited Hamlet’s advice to actors on the purpose “of playing,” I scrawled away madly, only concerning myself with the making the product of my classroom, the student, accountable, measured and confined to my carefully constructed rubric. All final monologues had to be from published materials, no editing allowed to preserve the integrity of the author, and absolutely no self-authored pieces; those were rules that I had devised from years of student not taking the assignment “seriously” and hints from district administration that the longevity of my program could be persevered if I created a curriculum map that clearly defined and gave proof of proficiency.

On the outside, my classroom reflected a beautifully intact theater program and a “fun”-learning environment but upon further inspection, there were many cracks in the mirror. I was not the fairest in the land nor did I know why. My students through Hamlet and half-hearted attempts to take on the supporting roles that I had cast them in suddenly reminded me of the “purpose of playing.” Intuitively, I knew something was inauthentic and as my students held the mirror up to my teaching. I was reminded that any art must attempt to reach a higher form of truth, not mere entertainment and had to reflect “the nature” of the student. Through using the theater's moral function, the nature of my teaching virtues and vices reflected back to me in the product of my students.

This moment of clarity seeped into the very soul of my passion as a person and as a secondary educator. I began to seek out answers and clarification to my feelings of disconnection, beginning with the teaching structure of the “Subject-Object” or as David Hawkins (2002) coins “I, Thou, and It” relationship where the teacher assumes mastery over the “object” /student data that becomes decontextualized and impersonal. Through the collection of data being so tied to learning in classrooms today, it tends to objectify students creates a submissiveness to one style of learning and to teachers. David Labaree (1997) identifies as a major deterrent to “real educational accomplishments” in American schools is that students are “remarkably disengaged from the educational process” and that this type of disengagement is turning students into “savvy consumers” while creating a structure within education that is nothing more than a marketplace transaction (pp. 251-253). Yes, one positive result of this is higher education for the masses but at what cost?

Confronted by my awareness that the space of my classroom was not a place in which honoring the students “beyond their academic capabilities” occurred and did not

“value the process of learning as much as its outcomes” (Gaudelli & Hewitt, 2010, p. 84), awakened me. Currently, students are products of a style of learning that encourages academic success but can be neglectful of higher learning’s demand for critical thinking and the ability for “dialoging” necessary to “come out of the darkness” of predisposed knowledge. The dialectical method, made popular by Plato in the Socratic dialogues, is a conversation between two or more people wishing to establish a common sense of truth through reasoned arguments. However, students currently enter the classroom expecting to be fed answers (Plato’s shadows) and are highly skilled in giving the instructor (the fire) those exact answers.¹ How do we encourage students to leave the safety of cave when the environment they are directed to is inhospitable due to mandated tasks and competitive nature of impersonalized learning? Plato uses dramatic dialogue in “The Allegory of the Cave” as a metaphor to emphasize the need for students to draw themselves out of the darkness of the “trivial, with dead wood from the past” (Dewey, 1916, p. 20) through dialogue and engagement with and dependency on the others in their learning space. Students have the possibility of learning authentically, in and through the context of the curriculum instead of being merely task or results oriented.

When implemented in a hospitable space of learning, this leads the teacher and students to ask more questions, fostering an increased give and take that deepens and enlarges the experiential whole. It is through this sense of hospitality that students can begin their individual journeys out of the cave. Dialoging and listening is the key to enacting reverence, taking the time and impulse to hear their personal stories, becoming lessons that have practical application to life, providing spaces to listen to both subject

matter and students. Working with these aims can give an opportunity for students to “be the art,” communicating through expression. As John Dewey (1934) states:

Communication is the process of creating participation, of making common what had been isolated and singular; and part of the miracle it achieves is that, in being communicated, the conveyance of meaning gives body and definiteness to the experience of the one who utters as well as to that of those who listen. (p. 253)

It is in this realm of reverent listening, creating a hospitable space for learning and through the dialectic meaning making of Process Drama in which a conversation can begin. It is through this conversation that curriculum can be shaped by teachers and learners through the process of cocreation by using drama as a medium through which learning can occur.

Chapter 2

Beginning the Conversation

To begin the conversation between hospitality, reverent listening and Process Drama, it becomes necessary to introduce a few writers who have been central to the support of the main ideas of this body of work. Throughout, I attempt to pull from the writings several authors; most noted are David Hawkins (2002) in *The Informed Vision; Essays on Learning and Human Nature*, David Labaree (1997) in his book, *How to Succeed in School Without Really Learning*, Garrison and Rud (2009) in *Reverence in Classroom Teaching* and Garrison and Rud's (1995) collection of essays, *The Educational Conversation: Closing the Gap* and lastly, from Dorothy Heathcote, *Selected Writings from Teaching Theater* (1984).

One of the many complicated perspectives on the relational aspects of learning is David Hawkins (2002) *The Informed Vision; Essays on Learning and Human Nature*. Hawkins uses the teaching structure of the "Subject-Object" or the "I, Thou, and the It" relationship. Typically, this is where the teacher assumes mastery over the "object"/student data and learning becomes decontextualized and impersonal. Through the collection of data being so imperative to the learning in classrooms today, it has the potential to objectify students and make them submissive to teachers and the curriculum. Hawkins focuses on how the triangular relationship between class content, the student and the teacher can be transformed and contends it is through the *relationship* created, that the "IT" becomes personalized. To begin the conversation about how Process Drama can be can create a more hospitable environment; the pairing of relationships through Hawkins *I, Thou and IT* framework must be noted.

David Labaree (1997) in his book, *How to Succeed in School Without Really Learning* identifies a major deterrent to “real educational accomplishments” (p. 253). The title of his book parodies the comedic musical, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, based on the book by Shepherd Mead first published in 1952, wherein the storyline follows the upshot of a young mailroom employee turned executive. The climax of the show encompasses the song “Brotherhood” that has the line. “Mediocrity is not a mortal sin” that exalts the notion that if one is uncreative and average you too could join in that “fraternity” of unexceptional people (Loesser, 2011). The eventual result would be overpaid, under qualified, men scrambling and “encouraging the individual pursuit of competitive advantage” (Labaree, 1997, p. 253). As Labaree concludes, this type of disengagement is turning students into “savvy consumers” and creating a structure within education that is nothing more than a marketplace transaction. I pull from Labaree’s assertions to give a foundation and definition to the inhospitable classroom.

In Garrison and Rud’s (1995) collection of essays, *The Educational Conversation: Closing the Gap*, a variety of educational philosophers, “Set aside talk of subject matter, lessons and tests” and “boldly reenter the immortal conversation” (Nodding, 1995, cited in Garrison & Rud, 1995) to write about “the soul, longing, wisdom, tragedy, relation and connection in teaching” (1995, in Garrison & Rud, 1995, p. vii). In Rud’s essay, “Learning in Comfort; Developing an Ethos of Hospitality in Education” (1995, p. 119-128), he describes the nature of hospitality as “bodily signs of eye contact and modulated voice, forms the manner of hospitality in teaching and learning” (p. 122). According Rud’s observations at the Belmont Abby, rules of hospitality embodied, “listening [was] first, being hospitable to himself in preparation to

receive others, stability permits the acceptance of boundaries within which the individual can grow, place yourself in the role of the student, listening to oneself” (pp. 120-122). He asserts that hospitable acts include emptying one’s self to prepare for the otherness of the stranger, willing oneself to be able to hear and listen. Key to Rud’s assertion was the notion that “when you listen to a student, the student becomes the teacher” (Rud, 1995, p. 121). He draws from the views of Henry David Thoreau, Henri Nouwen, the Benedictines and a central aspect of Deweyan thinking, to conclude that in able to create that space of hospitality, teachers need to “pay attention to themselves to prepare to meet the challenges of making schools hospitable for students” (Rud, 1995, p. 128). To have this fearless communication, teachers need to be open, empty, and prepared for the holy act of reverent listening. It is through these readings, I begin my defining and struggle with the how to create hospitality in the classroom.

Teaching as defined by Garrison and Rud (2009) in, *Reverence in Classroom Teaching* is about the “formation of minds, the molding of destinies, the creation of enduring desire in students not only to know, but also to care for others, appreciate beauty” (p. 2627). Garrison and Rud (2009) contend that being open to the “emotions and imaginative perception” of students is to be open to the listening of their stories. Again, the dialectic nature and reverence for listening becomes instrumental in the classroom. To be able to see students and the classroom as a gift, a space for housing infinite possibilities and something created together. A hospitable teacher is open to the otherness of the invited and uninvited learner; the student who is willingly engaged and the reluctant or fearful learner. By creating a classroom where reverence exists, shared ideas make it possible for the “realization of human potential” (p. 2630). Additionally,

Garrison and Rud assert that educators need to share their individual stories and imperfections to help emphasize to students that “all stories are ultimately co-creations” and we are dependent on each other for meaning making (p. 2639).

For example, Garrison and Rud (2009) reference the application of a teaching method entitled, the *Captain's Chair*, as a way to manifest or “express reverence,” allowing students and teacher to edit each other's work, therefor becoming “coauthors of each other's lives.” Building upon this concept, they flip the traditional mandate of respect in the classroom by asserting teachers can create hospitable and reverent learning environments by starting with a “deep respect for their students while seeking to deserve their respect” (Garrison & Rud, 2009). Dialoging and listening is the key to enacting reverence, taking the time and impulse to hear their personal stories, and finally, utilizing lessons that have practical application to life provides a space to listen to both subject matter and students. By the enactment of the *Captain's Chair*, Garrison and Rud connect to the “mantle of the expert as seen in the theories of Process Drama. Reverent listening conducted in the hospitable classroom helps to open a place for the medium of drama as way of learning.

Through the meticulousness and flexibility of her language, her ability to draw out extraordinary levels of engagement from her students, and the modeling of reverent listening, Heathcote began her journey to taking learning back to the authentic pursuit of knowledge. In *Selected Writings from Teaching Theater* (1984), she does not lie out a prescribed formula for teachers to imitate but rather attempts to elaborate on developing skills in others within the realm of issues concerning her at the time. She accomplishes this by encouraging teachers to set aside their role as master of the class, allowing

students to rather wear the “mantle of the expert,” enabling them to fully participate in the learning process. The medium for this learning comes through the application of theater techniques, closing the space in between student and teacher and in being fully present in the moment of the learning experience.

The above literature helps to direct a complicated conversation about the necessity of drama as a medium for learning by demonstrating how the relational aspects of learning, negotiated through drama can create greater understanding. So with the supporting characters, “I Thou and the It,” hospitality through reverent listening, and taking on the “mantle of the expert,” having being cast, the stage is set and thus begins the dramatic dialogue for authentic learning possibilities to take stage.

Chapter 3

I Thou and The It

For the purpose of this research I have included my own contextualized definitions of teaching, learning, and the connection between the two:

Teaching—The strongest elements of good teaching are the bonding of teacher to student, student to subject matter, creating a mutually meaningful experience, through guidance and dialogue. The experience must be meaningful for the student and help to develop the identity of the individual student. Additionally, the teacher must be qualified and thoughtful enough to guide students through new experiences while drawing upon their previous knowledge to reach deeper understanding for all involved.

Learning—Learning involves preparation for the uninvited learner through opening up to the sharing of culminating experiences, understanding and insight gained based on the output of information. Mutual messaging is necessary for the retention of particular information but will not always a guarantee that the student will come to understand the information in the same manner as the giver of the information. What is important to note is that it is an evolving process that gears itself toward the personal growth of the individual student not the viewing of knowledge as a product.

Connecting the two—Teaching and learning are interconnected through relationships being placed in the informal and formal settings, where both student and teacher being open to share in the learning process to make connections in meaningful ways. Authentic learning occurs when the learner can relate his/or her idea to others, make connections, and clearly understand the concept behind the words and use the

information to create a meaningful experience. Knowledge therefor becomes a shared responsibility for the collective well being of the learning community.

Mindful of the aforementioned definitions, I now move to the relational aspects of teaching and learning and the implications on the curriculum. According to Davis Hawkins (2002) in his essay, “The Informed Vision; Essays on Learning and Human Nature,” “It” is the subject matter and carries with “it” the greatest element of importance. “It” creates the condition that makes it a necessity for the teacher and learner to interact. Subject matter is the linking element between the teacher and the learner or student, without which teachers and students would not have a reason to communicate or be in a shared space. Hawkins advocated for educational institutions need to give more focus to the subject matter in the teaching/learning process. Additionally, Hawkins discusses at length the “relationship between the teacher and the child and the third thing in the picture which has to be there and which completes the triangle” (p. 52).

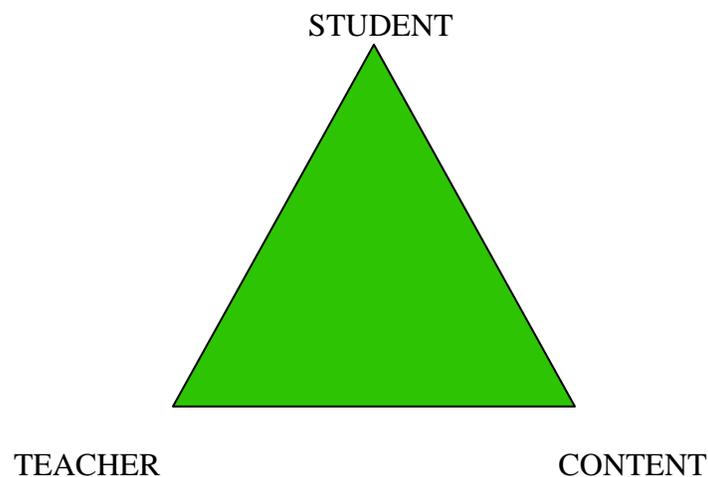


Figure 1. Hawkins “I, Thou, It” (2002).

For Hawkins (2002), the opportunities for teacher and the student as partners in learning are irrelevant unless a careful examination of the curriculum is present as well. This is evident in the personal story example in his essay, “The Informed Vision; Essays on Learning and Human Nature,” where Hawkins, while trying to keep the children of a sick friend occupied in a hospital. As narrated throughout his essay, he became panicked with the prospect of being left alone with two small children and began to realize there was nothing substantial or needed in his “I” ness. He then began to focus his attention on the “It” manifesting “itself” in an ordinary picture on the wall. The children were immediately hooked by his vivacious engagement and in their response to the “It” that he directed them to through his careful questioning. Having just met these children, he could not force a relationship or their immediate respect and therefor had to rely on the “It” of the subject matter until a relationship could be developed. Hawkins, through a simple enactment of reverent listening, reliance on the subject matter (the picture) and his intense concern with the reactions of the children to the subject matter, was able create an authentic educational experience, if only for the practical purpose of keeping the children occupied.

Later in his essay, Hawkins (2002) draws attention to “be[ing] a good diagnostician” and the importance of this skill to begin the process of creating relationships. He suggests finding a theme of communication with each individual student. Understandably, this is not an easy task considering classroom time limitations, curriculum mapping, and will initially take an enormous amount of time but Hawkins asserts it is well worth the effort. He reminds educators and scientists alike to enjoy teaching and be less concerned with “the matter of the textbook order” and to be mindful

of negating the teacher-student relationship. Most importantly, teachers are the facilitator of learning, they negotiate the curriculum being taught, and they conduct profound lessons in the poorest of teaching conditions. He further stresses that students deserve the respect to “seek out [their] accomplishments and value” in an “environment which elicits [their] interests and talents” (p. 56). Good learning involves making the “the appropriate response,” listening to students, and providing opportunities for them to procure a meaningful pedagogical relationship with the instructor through “common interest, the common involvement in subject-matter” (p. 64). For Hawkins, respect is a large part of this process and is not “a passive, hands-off attitude” (p. 54). Engaging curriculum that is built from within the student-teacher relationship is the “IT, in learning.

The main premise of Hawkins (2002) theory is the centering of the lesson in student feedback and learning that is cocreated with the students. For the purpose of this research, I have applied Hawkins “It” principal to illustrate how Process Drama can be a medium for this style of learning. A simple improvised theater exercise can become remarkable through the enactment of the “IT” and the theater curriculum that dictates theater students can be versed in improvisational scenarios, turning curriculum into a catalyst for evoking a more hospitable learning environment. Through the facilitation of play, bounded through real-life scenarios that the students help to create, students and teachers alike are valued for their learning accomplishments. By setting up a scene, teachers give opportunity to “respond diagnostically and helpfully to a child’s behavior, to make what he considers to be an appropriate response, a response which the child needs to complete the process he’s engaged in at a given moment” (Hawkins, 2002, p. 56). This “story” created through the input of learner and teacher becomes the facilitator

through which a relationship is formed and learning is authentic and personalized. The students' constant feedback and attendance to the scene takes away the uniformity of the lesson while working within the prescribed curriculum.

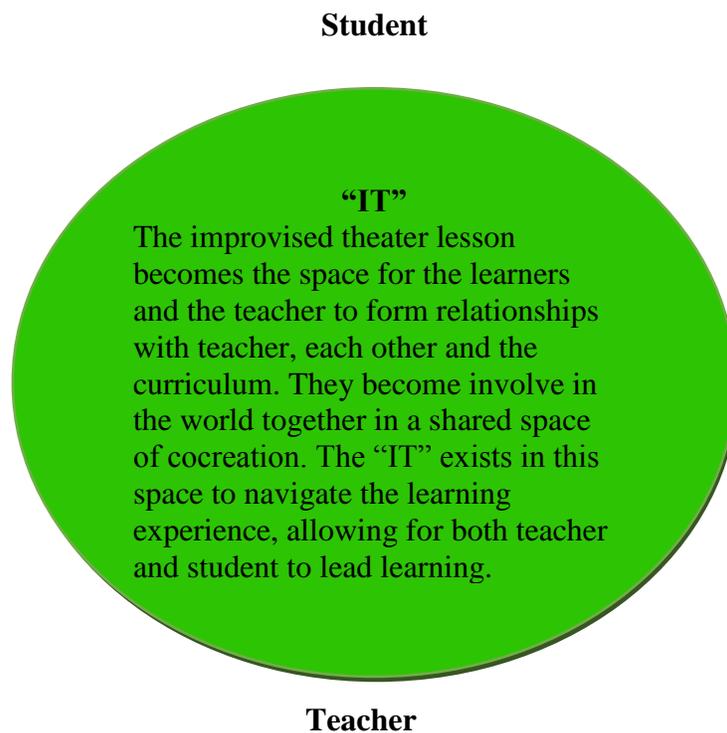


Figure 2. “I, Thou, It” when used with Drama.

When given the basic story, using *character, relationship, objective, and where*, commonly known in theater classrooms as “C.R.O.W,” students are able to build a relationship to the curriculum and to the “Thou”/teacher. The “It” becomes a basis for the relationship and a space for the “I,” Thou,” and “It” to become “involved together in the world” (Hawkins, 2002, p. 60). It is in this lesson, the content transforms by a communal effort for which original, authentic learning experiences can be created. The “I” is not the most important element to learning. The students become engaged and are converted into direct facilitators of their own learning as well as their classmates learning. The

environment of learning becomes personalized and hospitable through this relationship created in the “It.” The “It” becomes the direct object of learning, taking the “mantle of the expert” away from the teacher and making the learning “full of surprises, and less a matter of the textbook order” (p. 64).

Chapter 4

Commercialization of Education: Labaree and Palmer Verses Authentic Learning as Defined by Greene, Diaz, McKenna, and Macintyre Latta

Having established the need for relationships as critical to the environment of hospitable learning, how the “It” becomes the starting point for that relationship, and by introducing the possibility for opportunities for students to take on the “mantle of the expert”, it becomes imperative to define how complicated the curriculum conversation can turn out to be when learning is commercialized through current testing practices. Additionally, it is essential to attempt to define the invited and uninvited learner and the effects of commercialization on authentic learning.

David Labaree (1997) in his book *How to Succeed in School without Really Learning* begins the examination of education as a business transaction by questioning the very reason why society is pursuant of education. Is it for upward social mobility or to obtain authentic learning experiences? What are the societal consequences of placing more importance on the obtainment of degrees and good grades over the shaping of human beings and authentic learning experiences?

Labaree (1997) orders this structure for social mobility through the progression of three steps:

1. a demand form a graded hierarchy, which requires students to climb upward through a sequence of levels and institutions;
2. a structure of education that offers qualitative differences between institutions at each level, including graduation distinctions; and
3. a stratified structure of opportunities within each institution to be distinguished from his or her fellow students. (p. 29)

This type of hierarchy is inhospitable to authentic learning experiences. Students become a human commodity where the finished product is a degree and proof of social efficiency.

On paper, all are winners in this style of mass produced, pre-packaged learning where learners are neatly placed into ready-made boxes, armed with the tools to be solid citizens. However, Labaree (1997) considers the effects of this style of educational efficiency and defining of American education practices in meritocratic terms. “By structuring schooling around the goal of social mobility, Americans have succeeded in producing students who are well schooled and poorly educated. The system teaches them to master the forms and not the content” (p. 45). Students become disengaged through the collections of merits and accolades resulting in long-term social inequality and inefficiency. Labaree contends this “Promoting upward mobility frequently interferes not only with getting an education but also with getting ahead” (p. 262).

The system then becomes a facilitator for some individuals (invited learners) to fully take advantage of the benefits of merit degrees and allows for the disadvantaged student (the uninvited) to continue remaining outside of the possibility of equality in educational opportunity. If the whole point of creating education for the masses is to promote equality for all existing in a democratic society, how is this a clear benefit if there are still learners who don't know how to be savvy consumers of learning? How do we teach the uninvited if they do not even know what to ask or what is expected of them? Maybe for a short time student test scores will give the creators of this style of savvy consumerism “sound proof” that a student has learned but what happens when these “means to an ends” educated products graduate and have to make decisions of their own as one who lives in a democratic society? On a larger scale, democracy itself is reliant on teachers in the classroom to work within the practices of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) to engage in teaching practices that give room for the artist, the critical thinker, and

the kids who are marginalized by the educators “who think they can’t.” Metz in the collection of essays, *No Child Left Behind and the reduction of the achievement gap: Sociological perspectives on federal education policy*, concludes that NCLB and other teaching practices of this nature does not “have the funding, the commitment, or the educational understanding and practical levers needed to be, as it claims to be, a serious federal attempt to improve the education of all children and particularly disadvantaged children” (Sadovnik, 2008, p. 355). She further contends that NCLB is a way to discredit public schooling and raise up the practices of private schooling, further separating the uninvited learner from the ability to obtain equality and opportunity afforded by this savvy consumer-minded system.

To further complicate this conversation, it appears not just to be the society or the administrators that mandate this style of educational outreach but has become systemic in the educators themselves who become the direct suppliers of prepackaged learning. Parker Palmer (1998) addresses this continued thread of disconnectedness in his book, *The Courage to Teach* from the personal assumptions of the educator. He asserts that the heart of good teaching lies in the ability to resist a disconnection from our students, our subject matter, and our own hearts (p. 35). Fear based education is what drives teachers to use teaching methods that presume students are already “brain-dead” and coma induced learning becomes the norm (p. 42). Parker further contends that the habit of teaching externally from a consumer-oriented perspective is killing the creativity and the authentic educational experience.

Authentic learning as I have known it, is where students pull from their own background experiences and knowledge to reflect upon new concepts and ideas,

manufacture explanations, and consider perspectives “outside of the box” to concepts and ideas, have evidence of higher order thinking, and can be connected to real-world applications. Aesthetic education cultivates authentic learning through the opportunity for personalized and transformative experience tied in and through the arts-making process. As described by Macintyre Latta in *Curricular Conversations: Play is the (Missing) Thing* (2013) aesthetic education is deeply connected to play and can “reconnect teaching and curriculum, providing access to the formative terrain of sense making for all students through aesthetic play” (p. 2). Play is characterized as the adapting, changing, building, making processes of all sense making. Play provides a space to bring “aesthetic curricular complications near educators, making the lived consequences very vivid, tangible, and possible” (p. 8). It is here, in the realm of play, which the invited and uninvited learners are welcomed, developed through sensory learning and an opportunity for equality is present.

Aesthetic education attends to the creation of meaning in each individual student. In the collection of essays, *Teaching for Aesthetic Experience*, Karel Rose embodied the justification for this style of education by sharing of her struggle with cancer and the transformative nature of the arts (Diaz & McKenna, 2004). “Slowly my anxiety is transformed through the understanding that pain in life is necessary; suffering is optional” (Diaz & McKenna, 2004, p. 102). By experiencing the nature and beauty of the arts she was able to transform her experience into a manageable situation. The transformative nature of working within the arts, for personal or educational purposes is one of the most important lessons one can convey to students. She later contends that reflective teachers are those “who wish to act as transformative agents” need to think beyond the actual

experience to get to the connective nature of what it is we are actually trying to teach.

Joyce Salvage (Diaz & McKenna, 2004) calls for educators to work within the space of curriculum:

In the spirit of democracy, it is within our power as educators to model the way we should be as a society, beginning right in our own classroom communities. Accepting and valuing the unique literacies of each learner, providing a safe environment in which to take the risks to learn and becoming true colearners is a place to start. (p. 220)

To be co-learners and co-creators of curriculum is not for the faint-hearted.

Maxine Greene addresses the complexities of such a partnership through aesthetic education *In Releasing the Imagination* (1995), making a compelling argument regarding theatre education:

It takes imagination on the part of the young people to perceive openings through which they can move. It is well established by a variety of sources over many decades if not centuries that arts education (including theatre) is important for kids. (Greene, 1995, p. 14)

The Maxine Greene Center for Aesthetic Education and Social Imagination and throughout most of her writing is seeped in and honors the importance of the arts. Greene (1995) contends that through the arts we can achieve the dimension of the imagination in education needed to fight the narrowing vision occurring in classrooms and in curriculum today. Greene stresses that it is in the very nature of the inspection of art that students learn to question and see things “out of the box” and enables students to bring other realities “into consciousness,” to view things as with the possibility of being something else. Additionally, new connections can be learned through imaginative play, like improv games and the creation of scripts, therefore making students apart of the process of learning. “Offering our students choices in their learning and opportunities to direct their own methods of inquiry leads to intellectual growth through making new connections,

perceptually, affectively, and cognitively” (p. 168). Why is this important to learning?

Greene guides educators to an opportunity to bring in the uninvited guest, in the space of the hospitable classroom.

It is what enables us to cross the empty spaces between ourselves and those we teachers have called ‘other’ over the years. If those others are willing to give us clues, we can look in some manner through strangers’ eyes and hear through their ears. (p. 3)

For educators, this is a powerful medium for learning and creates an opportunity for students to fully develop their own personal greatness through authentic play and the ability to take on the “mantle of the expert,” casting themselves as leads in their own education.

The search for the good, finding the good, and finding the greater good in society starts with finding the greatness in our students. In *The Courage to Teach*, Palmer (1998) asserts one way to do this is through, “The way we diagnose our students’ conditions will determine the kind of remedy we offer” (p. 41). A teacher placing themselves as sole conservator and executor of knowledge creates a wide chasm that separates teachers, students and authentic learning. “To deepen the capacity for connectedness at the heart of good teaching, we must understand—and resist—the perverse but powerful draw of the ‘disconnected life’” (p. 35). This disconnection from authentic education leads and feeds the consumer minded shopper of pre-packaged “safe” forms of measurable education. Educators need to fight to give quality to education to the masses within the realm of the market place transaction. As clarified by Metz, the chance for equality in the classroom cannot come from mere gestures mandated by governmental compliances and will not fully address the paradox of structuring education in this way but not aliening it to the

“social, political, and educational structures that militate strongly against such equality”
(Diaz & McKenna, 2004, p. 355).

However, some answers are presented in Palmer’s (1998) observation:

The intuitive is derided as irrational . . . the imagination is seen as chaotic and unruly, and storytelling is labeled as personal and pointless. That is why music, art, and dance are at the bottom of the academic pecking order and ‘hard sciences’ are at the top. (p. 52)

Additionally, the definition of American teaching goals is in the general preparation of students for an intellectually for mature life, usually leading to the securing of jobs, societal status and to be able to participate in the democratic function of the society. What is not usually stressed is learning as a way to help individuals grow as persons and the formation of a fully realized individual. Understanding, as Hansen (2011) states, “Involves a change in the self however modest in comparison with the totality of one’s character, experience and outlook. Understanding entails questioning, inquiry, and wonder” (p. 96). Teaching and learning are connected through relationships, partnerships, and hardships created through honest dialogue while placed in authentic learning environments. Not through the silence of a learner who is silent not because of a lack of knowledge but silent out of the conditioning and disempowerment from never being given the opportunity to try on the “mantle of the expert.”

In teaching, the biggest factor in the progression of the learner is not relational to pedagogy, the latest trend in education or state standard but instead relies on reverent listening and sometimes the silence of the instructor. This provides a welcoming space for collaborative discussions conducted in the hospitable classroom and through relationships built with students. What motivates students to not only learn the daily learning objective but also extend the application of the lesson to a permanent realm of

knowledge? The relationship with the teacher through a personalized connection to that knowledge and by an allowance for students to “wear the mantle of the expert.”

Opportunities to develop the relational aspects of learning has become increasingly hard to cultivate due to time consumption by national test standards and the implementing of scripted learning. Teachers must struggle to hang on to authentic learning and reverent listening amid the testing and dehumanizing of education. A curriculum guide cannot convey how to assess what the struggling learner knows and does not know. It’s a combination of informal and formal assessing of students that can enable students to take a situation or a concept and personalize it, not just learn vocabulary, not just learn historic facts, and not just learn grammatical rules. A balance and dialogue must be created and be sustained between teacher, student and curriculum.

The teacher is instrumental in enticing student to ask, “Why do things happen?” and helps them to take that passion for questioning with them throughout life. Where is the possibility for implementation? It is through play and the invitation into discussion, facilitated through the teacher-learner relationship, which develops the discernment of what knowledge, is relevant to that individual learner. Dialogue as tool in learning begins the process of exchanges. As Smith (2001) illustrates learning “should be approached as relationships to enter rather than simply methods.” He continues to define the importance of dialogue through the works of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1979):

In conversation, knowledge is not a fixed thing or commodity to be grasped. It is not something ‘out there’ waiting to be discovered. Rather, it is an aspect of a process. It arises out of interaction. The metaphor that Gadamer (1979) uses is that of the horizon. He argues that we each bring prejudices (or pre-judgments) to encounters. We have, what he calls, our own ‘horizon of understanding’. This is ‘the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point’ (ibid: 143). (Smith, 2001, para. 9)

This is the place to begin the use of reverent listening to invite theater as necessary medium for learning. Through this style of learning, fear-based learning, as previously defined, is provided the necessary wiggle room to allow for the “experiments with truth” (Palmer, 1998, p. 36) and a small step toward losing the noose to allow for a renewal of teaching and learning. The invoking of dialogue directed to and dependent on the learner will take the passivity out of spoon fed education and extends the invitation to the student to speak and to give them the confidence to know that what they say is valid and meaningful to their individual development.

Chapter 5

Dialoging Through Two Perspectives: Dewey and Ashton-Warner

Dialoging as Defined by John Dewey

As John Dewey (1934) contends, the role of educator should be a “director of processes of exchange” (p. 59). If one were to take this role seriously, dialogue and the creation of a process of exchange would trump the aligning of curriculum to state standards and test achievements as previously defined by Labaree (1997). How will students to leave the Platonic cave if all teachers only focus on it the re-teaching of the previously scripted shadow stories? How do the stories differ from the invited and uninvited learner? A common element in dialogue must be co-created to begin an attempt at answering these questions:

By normal communication is meant that in which there is a joint interest, a common interest, that is eager to give and the other to take. It contrasts with telling or stating things simply for the sake of impressing them upon another, merely in order to test him to see how much he has retained and can literally produce. (Dewey, 1916, p. 217)

Dewey asserts that it is only in art, that we use the raw materials and energies of nature to expand life. “Art is the living and concrete proof that man is capable of restoring consciously, and thus on the plane of meaning, the union of sense, need, impulse and action characteristic of the live creature” (Dewey, 1934, p. 26).

The “live creature” that emerges from the shaping of “real experiences,” the real sharing of meals, real brushes with death, leads to a “consummation of movement” (Dewey, 1934, p. 39). To get to a conclusion of movement, the student must be invited create his/her own experience in such a way as to include practices similar to those observed by the artist. Opportunities through the dialectic nature of drama in the

classroom for a re-creation of that art is required for the object (maybe a scene from a play) to be seen as a work of art. But it must start with an “impulse” (Dewey, 1934) derived from the students’ interests, gathering details into a whole, shaped by the cocreators of this experience. Process becomes the artifact of the experience, which is allowed to unfold or evolve over time. “The real work of an artist is to build up an experience that is coherent in perception while moving with constant change in its development” (Dewey, 1934, p. 53). Students must be given time and space to produce an ever changing “product” of their interest and liking to have an authentic and personal educational experience. This is a key component and the beginning of the conversation between Process Drama and reverent listening.

Dialoging with the Uninvited Learner: Sylvia Ashton-Warner

Another important perspective to the necessity of dialogue in the hospitable classroom is in the narrative description of teaching in *Teacher* by Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1963). She spent many years teaching Māori, the indigenous Polynesian children of New Zealand (Te Ahukaramū, 2012), using unique sensory and often trailblazing techniques. Her success largely stemmed from her conviction that communication must produce a mutual response to guarantee lasting change in the students reading and overall communication abilities. She demonstrated the imperative nature of dialogue to the process of teaching, utilizing drama and singing to teaching reading.

To begin this process, Ashton-Warner asserted that students are given primal words, words that they were connected to emotionally and passionately. “That means words that produce vivid powerful words gives them three-dimensional not the two dimensional words of the English upper class” (1963, p. 54). This process involved a

great deal of time and effort invested in each student. However, Ashton-Warner contents that it was the most effective way she has ever taught reading. She further states that, “No time is too long spent talking to a child to find out his key words, the key that unlocks himself, for in them is the secret of reading” (p. 44).

This led into the “organic” dimension of her teaching, fitting together harmoniously to create a whole unit of learning connected to the set curriculum and to the personal needs of her students. Ashton-Warner visualizes reading and writing organically as “noise, movement, time, personal relations and actual reading and above all communication” (1963, p. 47) all fusing together to “flow and release of forces” of her students. This style of teaching and the use of this creative force is a powerful way to implement learning. What is learning without creativity and student input? Where is input derived? Dialogue. If students are given the opportunity to connect with their subject matter through their own words and experiences, it could create a possibility for a more hospitable form of education and change the conditions of teaching and learning but more importantly, allow students to “wear the mantle of the expert” and become involved in their own learning.

Through the collection of outcome-oriented data being so imperative to learning in classrooms today and in years past, students have been objectified and create classrooms of quiet submission to teachers and the curriculum. Ashton-Warner wrestles with both in her fictional and non-fiction books, *Teacher* (1963) and *Spinster* (1958) the process of giving away the power of her role as teacher, replacing it with the role of facilitator. Groundbreaking at the time, her teaching style blew away the former model of teacher as drill sergeant, hammering in rote reading methods and put into place a more

totalizing technique, leaving the relationship to conduct or guide the learning. She does this by “knowing” them intimately and pours her own life to intermingle with her students regardless of the racial or social boundaries of the time. “Sensuously and accurately I vibrate to the multifold touch of my Little Ones, and to the Big Ones who invade at this hour. I am made of their thoughts and personality” (Ashton-Warner, 1958, p. 22) and “Singing to them . . . the songs my father sang to us at bedtime” (Ashton-Warner, 1963, p. 117). While humming to her “children” on a spring afternoon she is “no longer the imperfect teacher but the perfect mother and all these children, brown, white, yellow, are my own” (Ashton-Warner, 1958, p. 42).

In both *Teacher* (1963) and her fictional novel *Spinster* (1958), Ashton-Warner integrated her own voice into her classroom by singing to her students cherished songs from her childhood and creating a conversation that required constant feedback. These interpersonal and sometimes informal interactions demonstrated by Ashton-Warner illustrates how the use of brief moments of intimacy, created through her relationship with students, structured in dialogue as a process of exchange to teach, can meet students needs educationally and in their development as individuals.

Ashton-Warner demonstrated repeatedly how to take the “IT” and teach to the students’ level of knowledge, their context of understanding, all while recognizing her own limitations as a teacher. To know students doesn’t mean to have mastery over them, as a slave master over his slaves cracking the curriculum whip over them, but to have mastery of subject matter and to come to a common ground of learning. Reverent listening, dialogue and the application of play through “wearing the mantle of the expert” can stop the silent feedback of the invited and uninvited learner, inviting them to speak

with truth and knowledge. As Palmer (1998) states, “If we regard truth as emerging from a complex process of mutual inquiry, the classrooms will look like a resourceful and interdependent community” (p. 50).

This is the realm of understanding that Ashton-Warner sought out and created meaning with the uninvited learner, the Māori children whose educational practices were the results of white colonization, not dissimilar to the native people of America. Although today the Māori now represent a major and influential dimension within New Zealand’s society and culture (Te Ahukaramū, 2012), the question for me remains, how did the changes in teaching techniques of Ashton-Warner’s time and place impact this change in that society? Did the use of reverent listening, play, students as cocreators of their learning experience give the invited learner and uninvited member of a New England society the power to take their proper place in society?

Both Ashton-Warner and Dewey advocated that learning should be directed and shaped by the learner with the facilitation of the teacher as the director of this process of exchange. Dialogue and the creation of a process of exchange specific to the needs of her students involving creative play, trumps the aligning of curriculum to state standards and test achievements, creating a more inviting or hospitable space for learning. For Ashton-Warner it was through the minimizing of her role as “the expert” and through the metaphoric hospitable act of washing the feet of her students through the allowance of the students donning the “mantle of the expert,” a hospitable space evolved for the cocreation of learning. This space of learning was created by beginning with the words that defined her student’s primal understanding of the world, weaving that with her own stories and through the exchanges of the other children present in the classroom. This is a powerful

example of how dialogue in the space of hospitality and grace extended by and to the teacher can be an invaluable for teaching and in the shaping of individuals. By students beginning with their own language and stories with a receptive sometimes-silent teacher, creates a possibility for learning in comfort and for the embodiment of hospitality in the classroom.

Chapter 6

Rud and Hospitality; Rud and Garrison, Reverently Listening

Rud and Hospitality

Recognizing that there many limitations and complexities in trying to shape the classroom as home and home as the classroom, there is still a possibility to encounter hospitality and a reverence for listening as defined by Rud and Garrison (2012), inspired by an exploration of Woodruff's 2001 book, *Reverence; A Forgotten Virtue*. Classrooms being robbed of hospitality by the regiment of test scores and the collection of data opens up a hunger in the classroom, not for more updated technologies or relevant curriculum but for the basic connectedness of teacher to student and for the opening up to the imperfections and limitations of each co-creator through this understanding.

To begin, Garrison and Rud's collection of essays, "The Educational Conversation: Closing the Gap" (1995), a variety of educational philosophers, "Set aside talk of subject matter, lessons and tests" and "boldly reenter the immortal conversation" and wrote about "the soul, longing, wisdom, tragedy, relation and connection in teaching" (Noddings, in Garrison & Rud, 1995, p. vii). In his essay, "Learning in Comfort; Developing an Ethos of Hospitality in Education," Rud describes the nature of hospitality as "bodily signs of eye contact and modulated voice, forms the manner of hospitality in teaching and learning" (1995, p. 122). The concept of student as guest, invited or uninvited is significant to the conversation and to fusing dialogue, reverence, and drama as a medium to create a hospitable space for learning through the theories of Process Drama. Additionally, how we use reverent listening to make theater something to be revered as necessary medium for learning.

The truly reverent classroom is where students can take on the mantle of the expert giving them the language and appetite for learning, engaging them in the necessity for reverent listening. According to Rud's observations at Belmont Abbey, rules of hospitality embodied, "listening [was] first, being hospitable to himself in preparation to receive others, stability permits the acceptance of boundaries within which the individual can grow, place yourself in the role of the student, listening to oneself" (1995, pp. 120-122). He asserts that hospitable acts include emptying one's self to prepare for the otherness of the stranger, being open to hear, listen and most importantly, the notion that when you listen to a student, the student can become the teacher (p. 121). He draws from the views of Henry David Thoreau, Henri Nouwen, the Benedictines and a central aspect of Deweyan thinking, to conclude that in able to create that space of hospitality, teachers need to "pay attention to themselves to prepare to meet the challenges of making schools hospitable for students" (p. 128). To have this fearless communication, teachers need to be open, empty, and prepared for the holy act of reverent listening.

A good host will intuitively know the needs of guests; how to be gracious, welcoming, and sometimes silent and open to listen to those who were invited and the strangers who may appear out of the blue. It is the hope that students, if treated as guests they in turn, become the hosts that guide teachers and other willing students into their protective worlds of meaning making. Rud (1995), using Purkey and Novak's (1984) concept of "invitational education," asserts that hospitable acts include emptying one's self to prepare for the otherness of the stranger by willing oneself to be able to hear and listen to them. "Therefore, if we are not inviting and open to others, they cannot constitute themselves as persons, and, we too will be diminished" (p. 126). It is through

the invitation of silence that hospitality can begin. Woodruff (2001) illustrates that hospitality through the silence of the teacher, the tremendous “awe and respect” for students and for the subject matter is present by not interfering with students learning, giving them space to learn through their own power. Being mindful that this style of learning could potentially spiral out of control and that it must be orchestrated carefully by the teacher, Woodruff stresses that, “With awe or without, a teacher is well advised to be quiet from time to time about even the most ordinary of facts, so that students may make those facts their own” (p. 189). He further contends that for reverence to take place within the classroom, respect must be “freely given on both sides” but clarifies that teachers and students are “not in the same boat.”

A teacher should not treat students as equals in all things; teachers know things students do not. Still, at every level in the ladder of learning there are human beings perched with astonishing –but limited- powers of understanding and creativity. Obviously they are unequal in attainments; that is why they need to be reminded of the equality they have in reverence for the truth. (p. 190)

It is here that the necessity of hospitality becomes evident and pressing for both the learner and teacher. It is here that students take on the “mantel of the expert” within the space of hospitality, allowing for the enactment of reverence in hopes of attaining a higher truth. Woodruff (2001) points out that the attainability of truth is not strictly through a respect for the student and the student for the teacher but through a devotion and hope for truth. “What lies behind the teacher’s respect is devotion to the truth that, at this moment, draws teacher and students into a circle of mutual respect” (p. 203).

The silent teacher, sitting within the realm of hospitality opens up to the possibility of listening by submitting to the learner. Rud (1995) uses the imagery of washing the feet of the stranger, though no longer practiced by the Benedictine monks, as a metaphoric

illustration of listening first. As Rud contends, this is the key to hospitality in the classroom and for the purpose of this body of work, a catalyst for Process Drama as necessary medium for learning.

With the help of Brother Arthur, I see how listening indeed has importance for how one teaches, and for teacher education. When you listen to a student, the student becomes the teacher. This reversal of roles is important for teachers to realize, to allow their own learning, and to put oneself in the role of the student. (p. 121)

Garrison and Rud (2009) assert that educators need to share their individual stories and imperfections to help emphasize to students that all stories are ultimately co-creations and we are dependent on each other for meaning making. As an educator it is a humbling act to shed the mask of expert and sole giver of knowledge. However, it is through the stripping away of these barriers that I have come to know my students and learn from them through this act of reverence for them and the subject matter they present. It is in the submission and through the metaphoric washing of feet that teachers truly server students. It is through this humble act of attentiveness that mindfulness can be born within the teacher, leading to a deeper, richer concept of wisdom and knowledge. Goodenough & Woodruff (2001) in *Think Pieces; Mindful Virtue, Mindful Reverence*, further contend that:

Wisdom and knowledge are entailed by mindfulness, but we suggest that mindfulness demands more of us. Mindfulness is knowledge or wisdom that pulls the whole mind and heart of the knower toward a connection with the way things are in all their exciting particularity. You cannot be mindful and know things in a purely academic way; as you become mindful of something, your feelings and behavior toward it will not be untouched. (p. 586)

It is in this mindfulness and involvement that the exciting particularity of students can be developed. The mindful ask of washing the feet of our students and the hospitable act of welcoming them in as an honored guest, that the hope of reaching a deeper truth,

rather than mere facts, can begin. It is in this *mindful reverence* (Goodenough & Woodruff, 2001) that we can begin to develop the capacity to see something deeper and greater than ourselves in the anticipation of receiving another's thoughts, emotions and feelings.

One of the many examples of this ancient tradition and a powerful illustration for mindful acts is found in John 13:13 (New Revised Standard Version), as Jesus embodies the good host and instructs his disciples in task of washing feet:

You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. John 13:13. (Meeks & Bassler, 1993)

It is through this hospitable act that Jesus is calling his followers to seek a deeper truth through an ancient ritual. He fearlessly invites the uninvited, manifesting in the form of the poor, the violent, and the most hated of persons in society and demonstrates mindfulness through a deeper truth seeking, physicalized in feet washing. He understood, as many who have enacted this ancient ritual that one must be willing to stoop down and serve their fellow human being, even to the point of doing mundane things. To be able to focus attention on this one task, on the simplicity of the act, to slow down instead of rushing through the task, is the beginning of a deeper conciseness. It is through this opening up, this service to one another, which true reverence, is found. It is through this mindfulness and attention to the invited or uninvited guest that an interdependence on the relationship of host and the guest that the capacity for awe and respect is developed. Attempting to achieve mindfulness, one must be open to the capacities of the uninvited learner and make room for their exciting particularities.

It is hospitable to allow students to take on the role of the expert and listen in reverence as they attempt to shape their own learning experience. According to Rud (1995), listening to one's own inner voice can lead to the allowance of space for students to take on the role of teacher. It is through the listening, that openness is created for the student to enter in and allow the teacher to benefit as well through a cocreated learning experience. For example, before you can create an authentic character, the actor must be true to the inner voice that screams at them from behind their mask. Without this inner life, the ability to alter your voice and movement patterns to those of your character is impossible. Additionally, acting is listening and reacting to what your acting partner gives you. It is imperative in acting to understand that listening means to direct your attention on someone as they speak and think about what they are saying. Actors often make the mistake of thinking that listening what's in their head is more important than listening to the other character. This leads to bad listening and to bad acting.

Rud and Garrison: Listening

Rud and Garrison, in *Teaching with Reverence* (2012), define reverence in the classroom as the:

Comprehension of human limitation, imperfection, and our appropriate place in a community with others arising from feelings of awe and emotions of respect, shame, and humility regarding experiences of something or someone that meets at-least one of the following conditions: (1) something or someone that cannot be changed or controlled by human means, something we are powerless to alter; (2) something or someone we cannot create; (3) something or someone we cannot completely understand; and (4) something or someone transcendent, something supernatural. (p. 3)

With this gauntlet being thrown down, teachers are placed in the role of host to a world of awe, wonder and respect that would appeal to even the most hardened of heart student. As a good host, teachers place reverence in the honoring of who the guest is at

the time of their arrival, while relating it to the “Subject” taught that will in turn, create new aspects of the guest. Reverence in the classroom is manifested by forethought and through anticipating how students might feel as the uninvited learner and then putting them at ease, even if we lack an initial understanding of their stories. These practices give hope for students to go beyond the silent feedback of the consumer-minded classroom and build a higher ideal of education. These elements could contribute to a spirit of trust and openness in a safe space for learning. Students that are honored and engaged constructively through honest and meaningful conversations would experience a “strong sense of the sacred, of standing on hollowed ground, of destiny, of passion (and compassion), and of things toward which words may only point, but never hope to hold” (Rud & Garrison, 2012, p. 3). I can think of no higher expectation for teaching.

Reverence is at the heart of good teaching and learning but does not establish itself simply in a series of activities or pedagogical strategies. Rather, reverence has to begin with dialogue created in the space of hospitality, building up relationships between learner and teacher. There can be no creative dialogue without authentic relationships. Although taking risks in the classroom is often loud and boisterous, silence and humility is also a component of good teaching in relation to listening reverently. “Teaching is not just about the transformation of knowledge, or even its expansion. Its calling is higher than that. . . . Reverent listening to both student and subject matter greatly aids this kind of teaching and learning” (Rud & Garrison, 2012, p. 2). Allowing the profundity of the moment to sink in, even if it is only for effect, is instrumental to the opening of opportunities for students who “might otherwise maintain a subjugated silence” (Rud & Garrison, 2012, p. 4). Listening reverently is not a grand act or plan; it is an opportunity

to open oneself to empathetic listening, attempting a greater understanding, not mere fact accumulation or savvy consumption of knowledge.

For example, in social gatherings the person who listens intently that is the most delightful to talk to and who is considered to be a great conversationalist. When you are listened to, you feel that what you say is important and feel a sense of worth. This enacting of reverent listening can be applied to the classroom. As a director, one of the major hurdles I continually faced was when my actors concerned themselves primarily with dialogue, forgetting that what they *do* is as important as what they *say*. I concur that distinct and memorable dialogue is an important part of the storytelling process and sometimes the only reason an audience will attend a particular show, but it is only *one* of the tools necessary to get the story told. The words of a script too often become the defining reason for the actors' inner journey, not used as the boat that carries them on their journey. They become too invested with the words to pay attention to what was going on between them and their acting partner. Students focused on the words and themselves rather than on their scene partners, negate the relationship needed for authentic acting. Additionally, disconnect occurs between what is on the printed page and what actors think they should be focused on.

This is the same in many classrooms outside of the acting classroom. The relationship with their teachers, peers and with authentic knowledge is too often “frequently sacrificed for accumulation of grades, credits, and other badges of merit” (Rud, 1995, p. 123). This condition, commonly present within the realm of actors, is the same problem occurring in the classroom overly concerned with “the words” of knowledge, regurgitated, tested and approved by the powers that be. Students in many of

today's classrooms become disconnected to the reality that they are supposed play the leading role in their own lives. Are we producing bad actors through this style of learning and negating the promises that lie underneath the masks we create for them? Are they screaming silently underneath them? What about the story that lives within the student that they are supposed to be the cocreators of? This passive way of learning and reaction to learning is what many classrooms are being shaped by, resulting in the creating mimes and supporting actors in a place where leading roles should be given.

How Reverent Listening Can be Used in the Theater Classroom

In a variation of a common theater exercise, the listening game, students are presented with a variety of lines that contain vast amounts of emotional subtext. For example, the line "I am leaving." Short, simple, but heavy with meaning and yet flexible enough to work with any level of ability. Each line should be delivered with full physical and emotional commitment and with eye contact. Students are instructed to listen for the beginning, middle, and end, so that they not only take in what is delivered to them, but react to it as well. Once they react to the giver, the listening receiver must then transition into giving the same line to the person sitting next to him or her. The line of dialogue can travel to the left or right, depending on learning environment. Each exchange should make for a completely realized moment—the smallest unit of storytelling on stage. It should have a beginning, middle, end, and a believable transition to a new beat, as the receiver becomes the giver when the line of dialogue is passed along. The transition from receiver to giver is an actable moment and can be profoundly believable regardless of talent or experience level. This acting exercise teaches students to allow for the profundity of the moment to sink in, allowing the student and teacher to be affected, but

most importantly, teaching them to reach out to each other exchanging the role of expert and learner.

There are several ways to demonstrate a reverent response to students in and outside of the theater classroom; confirm and encourage them through compliments, restating what they have said, and writing down their ideas on the board. Provide feedback; say what you are thinking verbally or as a response to their written comments. Challenge and engage them on several different levels, incorporating their own stories and perspectives. *Everyone's* story has purpose and value. As educators and facilitators of authentic education, it is imperative that we humble ourselves to the profound nature of our students, prepared to reverently listen to them in expectation they are capable of wearing the "mantle of the expert."

Chapter 7

Justification for Arts Infused Education: A Starting Point for Process Drama

The Importance of Arts in Education

John Dewey, a long-time advocate for arts education in public schools, believed that arts-based learning should be part of the daily experience of all humans. Dewey contends that art is part of the daily life and work of humans at all status and socio-economic levels. However, for humans to have an aesthetic experience, the art “needs to be seen and perceived, not just identified or recognized; thus the need for arts education” (Dewey, 1934). The lack of “artificial” and “contrived” experiences, invited through the use of drama practices is authentic education. Theater requires you to be true to yourself (Shakespeare) and requires you to tear down “the forth wall” through the interactions with others around you. To drive to the conversation of how theater can become a necessary medium for learning, justification for schools and curriculum that lends itself to these practices is needed.

Studies Supporting the Arts and the Importance of Research

Saying there is a need for Arts Education has become cliché after a certain amount of tedious pleading. Research, however is a powerful tool in the time of scientific based education where proven measures of accountability and results rule over simple aesthetic education. In the study “Learning through the Arts: Lessons of Engagement” conducted by Smithrim and Upitis (2005), teacher and student transformations and administrative practices are documented and analyzed. Smithrim and Upitis content that “Justification for the arts comes from the important and unique contributions that arise from arts education” (p. 111). Their study is an indicator of how the “IT” in education

(Hawkins, 2002) works in the classroom. Engagement, external loop, external feedback are all factors in arts based classroom. Through making appropriate responses in their interactions with students, teachers and artists are more focused on the teacher-child relationship. Arts based education provides concrete opportunities teachers and artists to procure meaningful pedagogical relationships with students through “common interest, the common involvement in subject-matter” (p. 64). Most importantly, Smithrim and Upitis (2005) provide accurate samples of how through the use of artists in the classroom, students’ life, both within and outside the schools are affected positively by way of the arts. Additionally, the authors noted the transcendent nature of arts based education. For example Smithrim and Upitis note “In one case, an elective mute student chose to speak for the first time in the school year when the drama artist was in the class doing a drama unit on transitions” (p. 121). This is one of the many examples of why drama based education is not a “handmaiden” for other subjects but valuable in its own right as a way to create hospitable learning environments.

For educators battling decreases or complete elimination of their arts based programs, these findings are powerful tools. Smithrim and Upitis (2005) through an extensive study across Canada involving over 6000 students, parents, administrators, artists and teachers, concluded that arts education did not take away from more pressing subjects as math and language study but “modestly but statistically significant positive effect on student achievement on math test dealing with computation and estimation” (Smithrim & Upitis, 2005, p. 121). What makes this study relevant to this body of work is the concept of transformation through experience and linking school achievement to attitudes toward school and engagement with school activities that include “involvement

of the sensorimotor or physical, emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions” (Smithrim & Upitis, 2005, p. 111). It is applicable to all subject areas in the notion that through the arts, an overall sense of engagement is increased. Arts based education; it’s not just for actors or musicians in fine arts schools. Smithrim and Upitis (2005) demonstrated how the arts can be immersed in all types of elementary and secondary schools, not just in those few schools where the teachers and administrators have a commitment to the arts or segregated in the elite world of fine arts schools. Additionally, the findings demonstrate how teachers and administrators can contribute to student development while increasing their own personal and professional beliefs and practices by fully embracing the conversation begun through the implementing of these practices.

As teachers, not just teachers involved in the arts, the need to reclaim the fundamental value of education, learning for the sake of learning (Greene, 1995), is imperative. Viewing drama as a necessary medium through which learning can be facilitated, can be a means of effecting or conveying established curriculum, leading to the total engagement of all participants, creating a meaningful experience that transcends barriers of race and social economic status brought by the invited and uninvited learner. It is through this medium that teachers can achieve a dimension of the imagination in education needed to fight the narrowing vision occurring in classrooms today. It is in the inspection of this art that students are invited to learn to question and see things “out of the box.” Imagination enables us to bring other realities “into consciousness,” to view things as with the possibility of being something else (Greene, 1995).

Public schools reside in test-based standards of reform and due to current testing practices being thrust on to educators; many students get lost in the shuffle of classes and

are inadequately served by traditional instruction and testing methods. They are lost and are losing valuable learning experiences in and out of the classroom. Some students are ineligible to participate in after school arts based activities due to failing standardized test scores or classroom grades. By making it an essential part of the curriculum in all schools, either through arts based classes or by the implementing of simple drama practices in the classroom, students have opportunity for artistic development as well as the academic benefits previously noted.

The Impact for Teachers of All Subject Areas

Theater has historically impacted the views of society as a whole and can reflect the morals and issues of that society. There are multifarious examples of the applicable nature of arts based education in relation to creating a commonality to meet the vast differences in students' gender, cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds. The theater educator can be a tremendous source of guidance to teachers of different subject areas and may be best suited to develop and deliver appropriate instructional lessons that are consistent with set curriculum standards. The skills and knowledge taught in theatre curriculum are vast and complex; they overlap and reinforce skills taught in all academic curricula and act as a conductor to other subjects' educational goals.

Short-term goals of a theater curriculum either on its own or as reinforcement with other subject areas are communication skills, interpersonal skills, and self-confidence as they explore ways of accessing their imaginations in both concrete and abstract forms. Long-term educational goals may include, problem-solving, identifying and creating details, critical thinking, taking turns through learned empathy, cooperative learning, and listening skills. Undeniably students involved in the arts, especially those

who are integrated within the structure of the curriculum established by the school and district, will be more effective academically, personally, and in relation to their communities. However, it is through the direct invitation to wear the “mantle of the expert” in the theater classroom or in classrooms that use theater as a medium for learning, that students have a greater opportunity to learn attentiveness to themselves, creating a possibility for a more fully realized and complex human being.

Chapter 8

Process Drama: Enabling Students to Wear the Mantle of the Expert

Hospitable acts include emptying one's self to prepare for the otherness of the stranger, to be able to hear and listen to them. Dorothy Heathcote demonstrates how the use of reverent listening creates a space for theater to become revered as necessary medium through which learning can be facilitated. It can be a means of effecting or conveying something by starting with these four basic steps: (a) child-centered approach, (b) begin from where the child is, (c) mutual trust and respect, and (d) drama as a tool (Hensten, 1986, p. 25). The "live creature" that emerges from the shaping of "real experiences," in authentic drama instruction created in the space of hospitable learning, enacted through the use of reverent listening, is a necessary for triggering holistic learning in the acting classroom and in situations across the curriculum. Additionally, it can become the artifact of the experience, which is allowed to unfold or evolve over time. Students given time and space to produce an ever changing "product" of their interest and liking could open a space for "intersections of difficulties, distances, differences" so they can "enlarge [their] understandings" (Macintyre Latta, 2013, p. 101). Process Drama helps to cultivate within students the ability to think things through, to develop and listen to his or her inner voice. The inner voice represents the thoughts we have when presented with a decision. It enables the student to see the good and bad points of each choice, and help predict what would happen once a choice is made.

Process Drama is an enactment of reverent listening, leading to engagement of all participants, creating a meaningful experience that transcends all barriers brought by the invited and uninvited learner. So then the question is not whether we can we create a

hospitable space for learning through the theories of Process Drama but how we use reverent listening to create a space for theater to become revered as necessary medium through which learning is facilitated. The truly reverent classroom is where students can take on the “mantle of the expert” giving language and an appetite for learning, engaging them in the necessity for reverent listening.

The theories of Process Drama as defined and created by Dorothy Heathcote (1975), and the theorizing of Garrison and Rud’s (2009) reverent listening, further my journey through Process Drama. Students can physicalize being completely present during a conversation through the assistance of reverent listening and the act of empathetic giving and receiving, formatted through improvisational play. As a result, the student, immersed in an experience, gains a greater sense of how it must feel to be like that person in that present moment and have an opportunity to “wear the mantle of the expert” (Bolton & Heathcote, 1995).

Cecily O’Neill, in the forward of *Drama for Learning* (1995), aptly defines Heathcote’s concept of taking on that roles as:

The student inhabits their own roles as experts in the enterprise with increasing conviction, complexity, and truth. They grow into their roles in a way that goes far beyond the functional as they experience the engagement of both identity and capacity within the tasks they undertake and the challenges they encounter.
(p. IX)

Teachers and learners can become co-creators of learning through the giving and receiving of understanding, with the end goal being the development of the student and teacher into more complex human beings through the attainment of complex thinking skills and empathetic listening. By providing opportunities in the classroom for a re-creation of real-life experiences, the art of acting can be seen through the object (maybe

an unscripted scene of a co-created play), hence creating space for that object to be concretely experienced as a work of art (Dewey, 1934). Process Drama is a give and take dialectic process that requires a level of comfort and reverence for “the others” the student or teacher may know little or nothing about.

It is when the desires and aims, the interest and modes of response of another become an expansion of our own being that we understand him [she]. We learn to see with his eyes, hear with his ears, and their results give true instruction, for they are built into our own structure. . . . (Dewey, 1934, p. 350)

One way to toss out the pressure of a finished “product” in conventional theater education is to throw out the script, designated roles, and a director who coaches the actors. Process Drama is a focus on the creative instructional method, providing a hospitable space for teachers and students to have an opportunity to wear the “mantel of the expert” of their experience of telling a story, rather than rehearsing and presenting a final performance. The focus is not for the students to create a performance for others, but to create an experience for themselves by working through an issue or challenge, making important discoveries about themselves and others along the way.

Key differences between product verses process based drama are: Process Drama:

1. the emphasis is placed on participants experiencing personal growth through an exploration of their understanding of the issues within dramatic experience;
2. co-created topics are explored through improvisation;
3. student and teacher share equal responsibility of the development of the scene; and
4. the scene is normally not performed for an audience. (Weltsek-Medina, 2006)

Product based drama focuses on

1. the student’s personal growth is measured through the learning of skills;
2. the study is facilitated through a scripted work not of the student’s making;
3. the teacher transfers her or his interpretation and analysis of the drama; and
4. the primary objective is formal play production. (Weltsek-Medina, 2006)

Improvisation is the heart of Process Drama. Through improvisation, personalized worlds are created and guided by participants, having an opportunity to explore deep personal connections to themes and issues. The improvisations provide an opportunity to engage in authentic questioning as students take on fictional roles. However, the characters traits, actions and justifications for actions are not scripted and the teacher neither judges nor corrects the choices students make (Weltsek-Medina, 2006). Instead, the participants themselves determine the actions the characters take in Process Drama interplay. The characters' lives in a Process Drama can only develop in direct relationship to the lived experiences of the actors themselves. The key to unpacking Process Drama is honing in on the "bodily signs of eye contact and modulated voice forms the manner of hospitality" (Rud, 1995, p. 122) and the constant engagement of questioning to create this experience. This is of the utmost importance because acting and authentic learning is a give and take dialectic process.

Drama as a Learning Medium: Dialogue as the Synthesis to Hospitable Learning

Dialoguing in the hospitable theater classroom or in classrooms where "conscience effort [s] to employments of the elements of drama to educate" (Wagner, 1976, p. 12) involves a submission to the idea that the person you are interacting with is complex and has a variety of thoughts and feelings. It is important to note that the teacher must still remain in her role as learning facilitator and to be conscience of the dance of power that seems to pervade most classrooms. To deny that would over simplify the reality of this common challenge in classrooms. However, what if the challenge of traditional social order and control in the classroom could be alleviated though the Christ-like image of hospitality? Replace the traditional images of classroom management,

where the teacher holds mastery over students through the set curriculum and replace it with a willingness to share this space of learning through the exploration of inner feelings and inner thoughts. Could the ancient act of submissively washing feet be seen as a metaphor for reverent listening? This seemingly submissive act is the beginning of an invitation to “the others” in our classrooms. It is through this act of hospitality, through the teacher’s submission of the self, the fusion of Rud’s (1995) concept of hospitality in the classroom and where the complexities of the power from the role reversal can be enacted. For teachers, mastery of classroom management becomes a moot point when the teacher respects the students she interacts with by the modeling of reverent listening. For Heathcote, hospitality in the classroom manifests itself in the acknowledgement that she is not the expert and that the students pick up the “mantle of the expert” by “signaling to the class that they know more than she does and have information she needs” (Wagner, 1976, p. 97). She doesn’t ignore their impulse to share stories as a busy parent distractedly nods and replies with “Yes, yes, I hear you but this is the way you should do it.” She creates the hospitable classroom through the act of reverent listening by “not correcting their misperceptions or misinformation at the moment she receives them-she lets her own expertise dribble out little by little as the drama proceeds” (Wagner, 1976, p. 97). By doing so, she allows the students to take on the “mantle of the expert” in a hospitable learning space but still remains in command of her own feelings, power, and own expertise. As consistently seen through the work of Heathcote (Bolton, G., & Heathcote, D.1995) this practice is a powerful medium for learning and creates a hospitable space for authentic learning.

Betty Jane Wagner, in *Drama as a Learning Medium* (Heathcote, 1976), describes Heathcote's method of teaching as, "Always looking for the precise dramatic pressure that will lead to a break through, to point where the students have come to a problem in a new way, to fight for language adequate to the tension they feel" (p. 13). Student and teachers can transform their learning experience by fighting for that language in a classroom that is hospitable and receptive by enabling reverent listening. Heathcote facilitated this through a powerhouse of excitement and as a literal medium, channeling learning through:

Slowing the input of information, eliminates the irrelevant, and selects the single symbol that can evoke the widest range of meanings; then she lets it slowly do its work, unraveling response within each student; she never tells a student what to feel or think, never pushes for more that the student can discover independently. (Warner, 1976, p. 14)

Working within the limits and potential of drama instruction, there is a possibility for classrooms across the curriculum to be stimulated through the imagined group experience while creating a space for the individual student to make meaning, finding language to reflect on their own experiences. There is a possibility to transform learning to something authentic, dynamic and free from the ordinary through increasing the students' ability to question, their understanding of the use of role, and a more complex usage of language through working with the deeper elements of Process Drama.

Process Drama Becoming the Medium for Hospitable Learning Environments

The documentary film *Three Looms Waiting*, Ron Smedley (1971) illustrates the groundbreaking work of Dorothy Heathcote but also reveals the faces of "the others" that educators must prepare and empty themselves for in teaching. The film follows the Dorothy Heathcote as she demonstrates the transformation that takes place when students

are given the opportunity to lead learning. One of Dorothy Heathcote's former students, now a teacher, Tom Stabler, first met Dorothy's ideas with skepticism stating, "I think these ideas of yours may work with intelligent children, but I can't see them working with the kind of youngster I've got" (Smedley, 1971). However, through the implementing of her theories, he later touts the transformative power of Process Drama. Throughout the film she demonstrates her highly successful engagement with several groups of disadvantaged boys of differing ages and ability levels. Is this the embodiment of John Dewey's "impulsion," where the strong urge to do something or motive behind an action was demonstrated in simple but effective theater exercises?² This "force" coming from her simple invitation to play, her passion to engage, starting at "an experience that does not know where it's going" (Dewey, 1934, p. 62) and then letting the experience unfold for itself instead of trying to control where the curriculum dictated it to go. In *Art as Experience* (1934) Dewey contends that it is through this transformative experience that the work of art (perhaps the student's performance or imagination in action) is formed and shaped. Is this the shaping of what Dewey coined as the relationship "of imagination as an ethical enterprise seeking to bring ends to actualization" (Chambliss, 1991) and is imagination the learning medium? Could this be the starting point for Heathcote's ability to motivate these boys to engage so quickly through the simple invitation to play? These were not boys at an acting academy, nor were they selected because of any former experience with acting, and most remarkably, she was not their primary teacher. She just met these boys and yet they were immediately engaged, connected and participating. Was she that engaging of a teacher or did these boys show up with a "hunger and demand" (Dewey, 1934, p. 61) to act? Heathcote

explains that by conducting theater as something that “grabs their attention, focuses them, and tells them what happening” (Smedley, 1971) she was able to create a spontaneous experience through the use of real tense situations of life-real emotions, not artificial experiences to attempt meaning making or the creation of art. Then she got directly involved, immediately lowering herself to the floor in a quiet manner, leading them into the serious nature of the experience. Dr. Hensten noted Heathcote’s key process was:

To create awareness of a particular curriculum concept (idea) through drama, she was also enabling the revelation of some inner truth (meaning) to be realized both by the teacher and the child. This inner truth was concerned with the condition of an individual, a group or an aspect of life. Often, universal truths were revealed. For example, if a class of secondary school children were looking at the effects of blindness on a newly blind person, she would create a moment when the class realized that this man's experience was that of every newly blind man's from time immemorial. (Hensten, 1986, p. 249)

At another point during the documentary, Heathcote created conflict in her role as a Nazi captain with one of the boys saying “I’ll remember you,” connecting to him emotionally, sending a shiver down the boys spine with her words, completely unscripted. The sensation was palpable and all the boys engaged in the exercise notably felt it. She took this one moment and created not only an authentic acting piece but an aesthetic experience in the classroom through her ability to take and receive, reverently listening to what the students communicated to her. Dewey (1934) contends that it isn’t enough for the expression of art to stay within the realm of the artist, it has to get out, cause conflict when the impulsion meets the environment. With Process Drama being utilized in the classroom, the teacher can explore a problem, situation, or series of related ideas or themes through unscripted drama. Through this negotiation, this space created for drama in the classroom, becomes more accessible, more hospitable for the hope of engaging all learners. By flipping through a range of roles, the student is encouraged to embody the

“other” and to consider life from that viewpoint, not just “manage and order his activities in reference to their consequences” (Dewey, 1934, p. 65) for mere approval from his audience. Process Drama allows the participants to experience a topic from many perspectives—to dig deep into meanings and feelings due to its grounding in the real lives of the participants. It creates an atmosphere of exploration and authentic experience.

Because the end product of a staged performance is not the focus, students can work at every moment to produce to the best of their ability. Heathcote’s aim, as stated by Johnson and O’Neill in *Collected Writings on Education and Drama* (Heathcote, 1984), is to use drama to “refrain from burdening her pupils with her own knowledge, to pay attention to their needs but withhold judgment, and through the role to negotiate an exchange of power with the class” (p. 12). With this intention, Heathcote can go past the curricular plan of “Personal Development” and is able to “build on her pupils’ past experience and give them a deeper knowledge not just of themselves but what it is to be human, as well as an understanding of the society they live in and its past, present and future” (p. 12).

Through this reworking of roles, Heathcote developed a new approach called, “the mantle of the expert” which she designed specifically for teachers who were uncomfortable with the idea of using drama in learning. This perfecting of her role of “teacher in the role of learner” enabled Heathcote to “Introduced mantle of the expert work when I was trying to help teachers who didn’t understand creating tension by being playwrights and to cut out the need for children having to act, or express feelings and behave like other people” (Bolton & Heathcote, 1995, p. 4). She contends that by

approaching the whole curriculum and not isolating one aspect of it, the learner can become more knowledgeable in a broader set of skills, as well as complex knowledge.

Heathcote additionally asserts that the mantle of the expert isn't expressed through an inauthentic status and structure created by the teacher. She contends that children respond and respect teachers who rather "doesn't know everything" and are able to "to along with them in learning endeavor[s]" (Heathcote, 1984, p. 38). Heathcote further adds:

The latter [stature] grows out of real care for the people and the task, the former out of self-seeking to preserve the hierarchy in the work. Master and slave get us nowhere; master and apprentice with both learning together seem to give both a chance to progress. (p. 38)

It is through this sense of apprenticeship that Heathcote additionally strives to respect the importance of the individual student and assist in the co-creation of authentic learning experiences, uniting the uninvited learners through communal expressions. She takes on the role of midwife, birthing her students into creative moments of knowing, then "weighs and measures it, pronouncing it fit, and then most difficult and important of all, gives it back to the person who made it and fought for it" (Heathcote, 1984, p. 13). It is this personal "product" of their own creation that students' carry with them, not the certificates of merit and achievement of the consumer based classroom.

Noreen Garman (Willis & Schubert, 1991) asserts that the drama of the classroom offers not only an important tool for learning in itself but a way to "sense the essence of school learning." She contends that by understanding the "dramatic events" in a classroom the teacher has a rare opportunity to "create the classroom as real world," providing a heightened sense of reality. Process Drama in any curricular setting can provide for a rich and long lasting encounter of teacher and learner that can connect

students to their “real world” experiences. The concept deals with the releasing of latent experience and knowledge in children when they assume “the mantle” of expertise while engaging in subject area.

A major goal of any director is to cultivate in their actors a “hunger or demand” on stage, to connect to an audience member, to make them empathize with the plight of the character. But the classic question arises; how does one motivate an actor into authentic, emotionally charged performances every time? Dewey cites Denis Diderot’s paradox (Dewey, 1934, p. 83) and exemplifies the actors’ problem. The classic question of “Do I lose myself in the character” or does one empathize with the character and transform that primitive emotion? Diderot knew that actors do feel and experience; but he also knew that some actors refused to recognize the need for craft, for training. One cannot truly lose themselves in the part or the art of the writer would be lost as well as the experience of the other actors on stage. Rare are the moments of silence by which the actor allows the scripts’ intention to flow through quiet moments on stage. Young actors have an especially difficult time realizing that every character they create doesn’t have to be bigger than life.

Through the theories of Process Drama and reverent listening, the actor can experience these rare moments of quiet, being shaped by their own experience, leading the audience to that unique moment in time as a result of seeing that character. Consequently, by taking the product out of the classroom or stage, a fuller, richer “character” of person is created. Process Drama when used on stage is a unique balance of turning the “mantle of the expert” from the director to the actors, giving them the ability to take their character in a distinctive direction but more importantly giving the

actor a rare chance to authentically connect real world experiences. This is an important way to negotiate learning within a curriculum that does not concern itself first with experiences that “illuminate and enrich each other so that changes in perception and understanding can occur” (Bowell & Heap, 2001, p. 3).

Chapter 9

Using Reverent Listening to Make Theater Something to be

Revered as a Medium for Learning

Process Drama as a Medium for Educators of All Subject Areas

Process drama as defined and processed by Dorothy Heathcote and later shaped by Gavin Bolton is a tool that can make connections with a spectrum of subject areas while using reverent listening to create a space for theater to become revered as necessary medium through which learning is facilitated. In her book, *Signs of Change; New Directions in Theatre Education*, Joan Lazarus (2012) references the impact Heathcote's learner-centered approach can have in any classroom. She cites Lauren McCammon's (2002) contention that when secondary learners "assume significant responsibilities, and form healthy relationships with adults and one another, they are able to move successfully through adolescence into adulthood" (Lazarus, 2012, p. 67). When given the opportunity to use tools like Heathcote's "Mantle of the Expert" through the enactment of reverent listening (Bolton & Heathcote, 1995) they are "powerful tools to liberate young people as artists and human beings" (Lazarus, 2012, p. 68). She addresses the uninvited learner by pushing educators to "design[ing] learning based on assessment of individual students' needs and abilities enables all students to find success" (p. 68). It is through this meaning making that students, regardless of learning impediments, social or economic limitations, be an active participant in the process of learning, not the product of sustained information. They are invited in to be active in the creation of their own process of learning, not just cognitively but socially and kinetically.

Pamela Howell and Brian S. Heap, in *Planning Process Drama* (2001), note that it is in the natural ability of the student that the process of drama uses to create imaginary situations to explore real-life experiences. This in turn “enables experiences to illuminate and enrich each other so that changes in perception and understanding can occur. This process provides the opportunity to see afresh and differently” (Howell & Heap, 2001, p. 3). However, the enriching emotional and/or social experience must be seeped in content and have meaning to create meaning. Howell and Heap contend that it is through the fusion of drama form and content, containing theatre skills/appreciation for theatre, combined *with* learning about other things through drama, that this tool of learning becomes an essential learning tool. Emphasizing the unifying nature of Process Drama and the roles that students take on enables them to “develop responses to it through active engagement and reflection” (p. 7). The role of the teacher then becomes to connect students to that content that is “lived at a life-rate and operates from a discovery-at-this moment basis” rather than by rote method of the consumer based methodology.

Gavin Bolton and Dorothy Heathcote, in *Drama for Learning* (1995), outline for educators three major guidelines to using the mantle of the expert approach:

Present the area of expertise effectively using a combination of teacher talk and visual image.

1. Introduce if early on, and in a way that will appeal to the particular class.
2. Give the group power to function. This gives the work its overall dynamic respect of what is seen as the major task, but many other minor steps may have to be taken by the class before this dynamic is harnessed.
3. Build a past, present, and future. (p. 30)

Both Bolton and Heathcote concur that the above guidelines are not steps and not a readymade plan to be followed chronologically. Rather, they encourage the teacher to work backward focusing instead on the abilities and feelings of the student to guide the

planning and action of the lesson, becoming co-creators of the curriculum. Using the above guidelines, Howell and Heap (2001) created four cornerstones of Process Drama: (a) play, (b) learning in context, (c) owning the learning, and (d) symbolic representation of experience (p. 9). From these cornerstones they have developed six principals of planning to enable educators to break down the complexities of Process Drama and bring it into the realm of the primary and secondary classroom:

- Theme and Learning Area: Identify precisely what the learning objectives are in terms of the human dimension with in it.
- Context: A defined and concrete fictional place, time, and situation in which the action of the drama can unfold.
- Roles: Student and teacher both need to decide what role they will take on in the drama.
- Frame: Point of view, which the role has about what is happening in the drama, which is critical in generating this climate, generating what the actors will talk about.
- Sign: Artifacts, props, personal items, sounds, images, anything that will bring significance to the drama, direct the child's attention and help them explore the activity the focus of the lesson.
- Strategies: The means to explore and present the content of the drama and to reflect upon it. (Howell & Heap, 2001 pp. 13-14)

An illustration of the enactment of dramatic activity using the above elements comes from a recent guest lecture experience for future elementary educators entitled, *Process Drama: Creating Wiggle Room in Curriculum and a Hospitable Classroom by using Drama as a Medium for Learning*. As I entered the room, skepticism and trepidation greeted me as I smiled into the tired, blurred eyes of a pre-service arts methods class. I was graciously allowed to enter their safe space of lecturing and quiet creating of art that had not yet required them to publically present or perform their learning experience. As I systematically tried to **appeal to this particular class** of pre-service teachers by outlining the importance of theater as a medium for learning,

speeding through the major cornerstones of Process Drama, how it creates a hospitable space for learning and my personal passion for theater, they politely stared back, classically conditioned to the intake of information. In an expedited manner, I attempted to address the complexities of using drama in the classroom, acknowledging that one must take into account the condition of the classroom, the nature of the curriculum, and the type of subject matter that is using theater as a medium to enact learning. Then to their shock and surprise I **introduced an acting activity** by instructing them to get up, form two lines and recreate an adventure down the Nile River, allowing the students to choose their character, and I as the teacher in the role, coached them into positions, giving them the **power to function** in their individual roles. I suggested archeologists, people native to the Nile, and doctors trying to reach sick persons but as I tried to shape their experience, something amazing happened. They began to create the **past, present, and future** on their own and took the adventure into a completely different direction by “playing” at first with something they were more familiar with, a roller-coaster ride. In true Process Drama format, I submitted myself to where the learning wanted to go and allowed for the “being there in the present” (Bolton, G., & Heathcote, D. 1995) by allowing them to draw from their own prior knowledge. Instead of controlling the experience, as teacher in the role, I allowed for the experience to go where they lead it, then pulling it back to engage them in the second part of the process; the enactment of the curriculum.

After this full body, sensory enactment, I brought the laughing; now fully awake students back to the lecture area. I posed the question, “How could they continue the momentum and excitement generated during the rollercoaster ride and yet still work

within the wiggle room of the theme **and learning area** in the set curriculum?" What are the **learning objectives and possibilities in terms of the human dimension** of their future students while using the rollercoaster ride? Using the basics of Process Drama I instructed them to:

1. Get into groups of four or five.
2. Apply the six elements of Process Drama by **assigning roles, working out a fictional story** of a canoe's journey down the Nile River.
3. Ask, "What is most important, exciting, or dangerous aspect or **context** of the trip? Why do you need to get down the river? Why are you there at all?"
4. What is the **climactic moment** or frame of the trip?
5. What **sign** or props could you use?
6. Present the fictional journey down the Nile.

The end "product" of this exercise ranged from outright staged comedy to well-informed, educational entertainment. This hilarious and student managed enactment of Process Drama produced rare moments of higher education students releasing their weariness, social roles, and inhibitions to explore the potential of their own deep levels of communication. Students were able to connect to personal levels of meaning and focus on the implications of the dramatic context. It challenged the students to crystallize their feelings about being passengers in this potentially perilous situation and gave an opportunity for students to SEE what happens to everyone else on the journey, so strengthening the fabric to the drama itself. The dramatic elements of **ROLE** and **TENSION** were not lost and lead to further investigation of other strategies the pre-service students could use to wiggle within the curriculum of non-theater subject areas like Math, Geography, Writing, and History. It was my greatest hope upon leaving the sacred confines of their classroom that in a time-span of 90 minutes and through the practicing of Process Drama, it helped to assuage their hesitations about using drama as a medium for learning. That they began to see that Process Drama can be an excellent way

to conduct learning, but more importantly, a rich and complex way for students to develop the product of who they are as well-developed human beings.

The Importance of Process Drama for Future Educators

Bolton and Heathcote (1995), with Howell and Heap (2001) agreeing, the above steps are merely guidelines and should be second to the instincts of the teacher and her intimate knowledge and the relationship created with her students. As illustrated in the above example, the guiding force of Process Drama is not in the giving of “gimmicks or little tricks of the trade” to teachers in training but concerned itself with the “drive to keep at the task, based on assurance that the goal is right” through “being gentle with children and sensing not when to push them to a great effort” (Wagner, 1976, p. 226). It is in the emphasizing of what Wagner stressed in Heathcote’s passion for helping new teachers understand *why* they are doing what they are doing. She wanted them to “be vital, alive, tolerant, patient, observing people who trust themselves and are creating a good working relationship with others” (p. 227). Heathcote, according to Wagner, insisted young teachers learned by a “baptism by fire” method and not be overly concerned or bogged down with information or techniques. She felt it was not in the drama itself that teachers should concern themselves with but rather finding new ways to relate to people that became the major focus (p. 230). This is the connection to good learning and good teaching for the users of Process Drama within the space of hospitable learning.

In the introduction of Bolton and Heathcote’s co-written book *Drama for Learning* (1995), Bolton, regarded as a co-shaper of what is now known as Process Drama, felt that teachers in training should follow certain principle’s that must be in

concurrency when implementing Heathcote's approach to drama in education. If you are in teacher education, you *must* continue to work *directly* with children, students in kindergarten, the elementary grades, junior high, senior high, indeed in educational institutions of all kinds, so that you are constantly practicing what you are asking others to do and evolving theoretical principles from that practice.

Drama is About Making Significant Meaning

Drama operates best when the whole class together shares that meaning making. The teacher's responsibility is to *empower* and the most useful way of doing this is for the teacher to play a facilitating role (i.e., the teacher operates from *within* the dramatic art, not outside it). The regular teacher/student relationship is laid aside for that of colleague/artists. (Bolton, 1985, p. 3)

For teachers in training this is a monumental task. What does it mean to work "within the art" and not "outside of it" or how to make drama about significant meaning? How does a teacher, not trained in the arts, understand these concepts when teacher training primarily concerns itself with the specifics of techniques, adopting an appropriate pedagogical identity, and concrete lesson plans? I would assert that it is about the specifics of the *process* of moving into the mantle of the expert, not teaching students to have the product oriented goal of becoming the expert that is the task at hand.

Finally, Gavin Bolton, in his article *Changes in Thinking about Drama in Education* (1985), gives warning to the users of drama who merely see it as a "piece of real life to be lived through is to misunderstand drama" or to "train children to be performers misses drama's potential for significant learning" (p. 155). Instead, Bolton contends that drama can be attended to in to in two different ways:

They can see what is happening in the drama as an illustration of what happens in the world outside. This can be described as referential attention where the action of the drama is seen as an instance of a more general case. Or they can attend to

the action of the drama “for itself.” This is the aesthetic attention where the essential meaning of the drama, resonated through symbolic object. (p. 156)

The vast benefits of using theater as a medium for learning are clear but the challenge of allowing students to take on the mantle of the expert, humbling yourself to wash the feet of the uninvited learner in a space of hospitality is another task all together.

Dorothy Heathcote, writing to Gavin Bolton in the concluding remarks of *Drama for Learning* (1995), has said:

Regarding your doubts about equating theatre and the mantle of the expert: it is a myth that I have done so. I see the *laws* of theatre expression – the seen and the not seen, the spoken and the withheld, the still and the moving, each dimension expressed SIGNificantly—as applying to both. You are right when you see *time* as being differently used. (Bolton & Heathcote, 1995, p. 195)

For my own understanding, Heathcote’s idea of time and the reality of place can be examined not only as events occur in the present, but the roots of the present can also be examined through the prism of the past and the implications seen for the future emanating from the present. Past historical events, past scientific discoveries, past literary events and plots. Teachers playing their part as “teacher-in-role” push the element of tension needed, suggesting plot twists that will add to increased dramatic tension within the unfolding series of events that will create authentic and meaningful experiences for all involved. This brilliant and hospitable medium for learning can only be enacted by the use of reverent listening lead by the teacher and demonstrated through the actions and reactions of the students. When Process Drama is used as created by Dorothy Heathcote and shaped by Gavin Bolton, it is a powerful medium through which learning can be conducted, partnering academic goals set by the curriculum and personal development of the learner as a fully realized human being. By the allowance of students being able to experience and grow in the realm of drama, they are not concerned with perfecting a

product for evaluation. This is where the embodiment of the hospitable classroom is enacted through reverent listening is enacted and an invaluable in today's consumer-minded classroom.

Chapter 10

Concluding Thoughts

I recently attended a Chris Botti concert and was truly inspired by several elements of the performance. The night was magical from its onset. As the snow poured down and people risked their safety in blizzard-like conditions to attend the concert, expectations were high to see this expert trumpet player and bandmaster perform. After a two hour sensory journey through several styles of music and a feast of instrumental mastery, he randomly picked two young musicians from the audience and invited them to “play” with the band on stage. Although this is not the first time he has invited a young person to play on the spur of the moment, Chris Botti, known for his intense professionalism and precision, stepped back and allowed the students to not only observe the master up close but be a part of a truly magical experience by being invited to become masters themselves. Obviously terrified to be called upon to play drums in front of hundreds of strangers for the climactic conclusion of the show, they politely took the drumsticks, received the instructions, and were left to play the highly complex *Nessun Dorma* with the assistance of drummer Billy Kilson. It was magical. This intense interplay between musicians, all doing individual meaning making with their instruments, fused together to create a moment of aesthetic beauty that will not soon be forgotten. The students left the stage humbled and amazed by the experience and by this rare moment of mastery and awe. For me, this is the perfect embodiment of taking the product off of the stage and replacing it with a fuller, richer “character” of person is created. The product wasn’t an overly rehearsed performance but allowed for a rare moment of grace and beauty for these uninvited learners, allowing for a moment for them to lead one of the

greatest bandleaders the jazz world has ever experienced. Chris Botti, as a director, demonstrated the humility of the hospitable host, inviting the uninvited and invited learner in, allowing for the seen and the not seen, the spoken and the withheld, the still and the moving, each dimension expressed significantly allowing for whatever reality to take place. This is the medium for a creating a hospitable space for learning. Process Drama is an enactment of reverent listening, leading to the total engagement of all participants, creating a meaningful experience that transcends all barriers brought by the invited and uninvited learner. So then the question is not whether we can we create a hospitable space for learning through the theories of Process Drama but how we will use reverent listening to make theater something to be revered as necessary medium for learning. The truly reverent classroom and performance space is where students can take on the mantle of the expert giving them the language and appetite for learning, engaging them in the necessity for reverent listening. I know firsthand there are lessons for all learning embedded in the workings here.

Endnotes

- ¹ Citing Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* is intended to illustrate the need for students to leave the cave of prior knowledge to shape their own personal understanding, not repeat another understanding of knowledge, in order to reach a higher level of learning. Although Plato refrains from claiming Heathcote's "mantle of the expert," it is clear through his writings, *Protagoras*, or *Republic*, or *Symposium*, or *Laws*, formatted primarily in dramatic dialogue (Kraut, 2012), and gives light to his reverence for the give-and-take of interchange facilitated through dialogue. By stripping the characters of their real personalities and places in society, it provided Plato an opportunity to bring forth his own thoughts and meaning making. The necessity of dialogue and the interaction of others to create meaning is a powerful component for both authors and necessary to my own working theory of dialogue being connected to reverent listening and the improvisational nature of Process Drama.
- ² It is important to note that although Dewey, according to Chambliss (1991) is supportive of the use of imagination and play, hesitated to "make the real artificial." Chambliss also notes that Dewey considered imagination to be a way to "try out an idea" that is rooted in reality, not create reality from imaginary situations. I draw from Chambliss' assertion of Dewey not creating artificial situations but making experiences from the real lives of students and connecting these situations by using Process Drama in learning.

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