

Drama and Theatre as experiential learning tools for Canadian classrooms

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Educational Studies

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Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts (Department of Education) at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

March 2007

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Your file Votre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-28831-3

Our file Notre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-28831-3

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ABSTRACT

Drama and Theatre as experiential learning tools for Canadian classrooms

Mindy R. Carter

Students need to practice using their voices in a safe and nurturing classroom environment in order to learn about themselves and others in a mature and compassionate way. By providing opportunities for students to listen and dialogue with their peers, the potential for learning to consider the needs of others can develop. Drama and democratically based theatre models such as The Forum Theatre provide tools that the educator can use to incorporate dialogue and experiential learning into each classroom and subject area.

By examining the importance of experiential learning and making the link between experiential learning and drama/theatre as tools to be used for learning in classrooms, this thesis provides a foundation that can assist in the development of democratic learning.

Acknowledgements

I wish to sincerely thank the following people and groups for their support, enthusiasm and knowledge:

Arpi Hamalian

Dr. Emery Hyslop – Margison

Dr. Ayaz Nasseem

and

Kevin P. Carter - Hayes

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to George Howard Carter and Valerie Cunningham.

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CHAPTER ONE – A : INTRODUCTION

Particular Qualities

“Men acquire a particular quality by constantly acting a particular way... you become just by performing just actions, temperate by performing temperate actions, brave by performing brave actions” (Aristotle, 1946).

The development of a particular type of quality acquired by regularly acting in a particular type of way has been a goal for educators, societies, religions and individuals since the creation of the first human settlements. This focuses on not what a society or people is but rather what they could be. For Aristotle, particular meant that there were identified and measurable virtues that when practiced would lead to the perfect development of a man. Only when on this path towards perfection could the process of refinement take place. The aim of such a process in today's terms could be described as living a life of personal fulfillment where grace or good intention for the development of the common good exists. One only need look at the tenets of Christianity to appreciate that this idea of living a certain way of life in a prescribed manner has been a common and occasionally successful approach for centuries. The significance of this when related to how the quality of a man or woman develops suggests that one who strives to cultivate a particular quality needs to practice it regularly and consistently to achieve the desired result.

Aristotle suggests that the qualities to be developed are: justice, temperance and courage. The Aristotelian virtues were valued in Athens 2300 years ago. Other societies might have other ideals. Adolf Hitler would likely have valued obedience, loyalty and ruthlessness. The Roman Catholic Church might like chastity and charity (perhaps in

some other order!) Japan, traditionally, puts honour at the top of its list. 21st Century democratic practices value independence, tolerance and honesty. Canadian education aims specifically at developing these qualities.

Tolerance

“Laws alone can not secure freedom of expression; in order for every man to present his views without penalty, there must be a spirit of tolerance in the entire population” (Einstein, 1961, p. 27).

Virtuous acts must be practiced in order to develop; tolerance and democratic living must be practiced and ‘performed’ in order to be learned. For a country like Canada, where education is in part a process of socializing our students, schools are directly implicated in the process of developing a tolerant and democratic citizenry. Necessary for this to take place is a level of confidence in the goodness of humanity. The observation of models and activities ‘of this kind’ allow one to experience what it means to exert personal choice (as it also affects others) in a safe and caring learning environment. This of course presupposes that individuals can express their thoughts, needs and ideas and can listen to those of others. Learning to organize and voice one’s own personal ideas, thoughts and feelings by engaging with others and their ideas in a tolerant way is a rehearsal for democratic participation.

Communication

Drama as a common element of human communication is not a new idea. Ancient cultures used it in dramatic rituals and role - play as a part of celebratory or transformative moments in their community life. These community rituals and dramas

included storytelling, music and costume in their representations of present, past and desired future events. In this way a common activity taught and encouraged the young to rehearse their future roles within society. These rituals were a reaffirmation of a common purpose where meaning could be derived from said experiences.

Once this is possible, the mutual coordination of action, the common appropriation of projects also is possible. Dewey finds the key in that of learning or dramatic participation. What one learns in education is to be born into structured patterns of activity. What one learns in education is to participate in these roles; to become a member of the group is to know one's range of actions which have significance for the group. To learn to be human involves learning to play by the rules (Alexander, 1987, p.159).

According to Alexander, the key to communication is how we participate in the life of others and they in ours. Unless we can work together and communicate, joint projects and growth cannot take place. The construction of The Tower of Babel illustrated this lesson very well. One way to unlock this potential learning is through dramatic participation. Dramatic structure, dialogue, rehearsal, interaction, personal discovery and involvement are all aspects of a drama curriculum that encourages this learning process. Education is supposed to help us to understand the structure of our society. It also helps us learn our place in structure and how to use our talents for self and group fulfillment. The development of the embodied mind through dramatic group participation is then a personal state of being and understanding developed through experience and reflection. This signifies that the understanding of self and the ability to contribute to the common good has become habitual. The goal of this refinement process

is the ability to communicate and participate in the common good. We cannot know others until we know ourselves.

Intent

It is difficult to deny the power that drama and experience have for the development of individuals and their interactions within a larger group. Dramatic participation is an apprenticeship for social life. If experiential learning, drama and theatre can be used within the classroom to prepare students for a communicative and democratic life where tolerance and dialogue are practiced for the benefit of all; a stronger democratic society will result. I will look briefly at the principles for democratic learning as well as how a number of theorists define experience as it fosters refinement and transformation in the individual. Can dramatic techniques in the classroom help students learn what it means to live democratically? I hope to draw connections between modern drama and theatre techniques and show how they can be classified as experiential learning activities focusing on the development of democratic citizens. There will also be an examination of Augusto Boal's work and theory of The Forum Theatre. This is a part of his Theatre of the Oppressed and uses democratic participation and personal involvement to help individuals to develop their own voices for use in later life. Included in this model is an approach to teaching and learning through involvement, drama, experiential learning and dialogue based upon democratic principles.

CHAPTER ONE – B: WHAT IS DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION?

A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustments of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder (Dewey, 1986, p. 99).

A democratic society is one that plans for the equal participation of its members so that all have a voice in how their lives and their societies should be run. Part of the intended function of schooling in a democratic society, then, should be teaching democracy and providing opportunities to practice it.

This sort of education should emphasize that democracy is far more than simply a form of government. It should provide a shared experience, in the hopes that if its members engage in common interests and pursuits, barriers such as class or race will be broken down and liberation will occur. This is based on the belief that society should not be formed into groups based on class or status, and that everyone is educable and morally adaptable so as to foster positive social actions and interactions. This democratic conception in education strikes a chord not only with the educator for its scope and possibilities but, with all citizens who take the trouble to consider its implications.

Genuine Democracy

Part of the problem is that the term “democracy” is often being misused. In its place, William Robinson (1996) suggests we should say “polyarchy”. “Polyarchy is neither dictatorship nor democracy. It refers to a system in which a small group actually

rules, on behalf of capital, and participation in decision making by the majority is confined to choosing among competing elites in tightly controlled electoral processes” (Robinson, 1996, p. 20-1). What obtains now is not democratic participation but a form of oppression or consensual domination by capitalism and neo-liberal ideologies that control society and life in countries such as Canada and the United States.

Education has not escaped the needs of business either: it has been restructured for economic purposes. Schools are expected to develop and promote skills and “lifelong learning” for an economy that no longer requires one single set of life skills from its members (McLaren, 1998, p.157). Thus, in order for Canadian society to be ‘genuinely democratic’, schools must also mirror this purpose.

Principles for Democratic Learning

Based upon my readings of Hyslop - Margison & Graham (2001), Sharp (1991) and Dewey (1986), I have put together a series of conditions that need to be embraced and considered when a democratic learning outcome is sought during the schooling process. This list will provide a tool that can be used within the education system for educators and students. Re-awakening the dormant and innate potential of individuals to reclaim their silenced voices and develop the confidence to influence social change leading to a better society is our purpose. Socialization and the development of a shared cultural literacy is therefore the first principle for democratic learning.

Socialization, “requires teaching students concepts, values, facts, principles, theories, modes of justification and dispositions that foster entry into established academic conversations” (Hyslop - Margison, 2005, p.3). A shared cultural literacy requires knowledge of particular relevant facts and common interests. This needs to be

learned in order to prepare one to participate in a community based enterprise such as democracy.

In a learning context, where there is a community of inquiry, individuals must be confident with their own ideas and abilities in order to engage in and respond to a certain level of critical dialogue. A base of willingness, understanding and knowledge must be present in order for communication and the ability to critique related materials to occur. It is thus necessary to provide the opportunity for one to experience, practice, participate and reflect on what it means to be engaged in democratic dialogue. Thus, one's cognitive development as it relates to these purposes and the hope that learning and action will occur as a result will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

Engaging directly in democratic learning scenarios hinges on the ability of the learning community, society and individual to provide and participate in such opportunities. Arguably, they should take place within a supportive setting where mistakes are seen as part of the learning process. Just as one falls continually when learning how to walk, one will not always have the right words or ways to express oneself when first attempting to engage in democratic dialogue. It is my opinion that the education system has a larger role to play here than it currently does. Curricular changes and new teacher education initiatives that open up better opportunities for direct engagement through participatory instruction can easily be made.

Finally, shared moral values or considerations must be present for a democratic learning environment. This principle can be identified as a set of:

social behaviors that can be observed such as: listening to one another,
supporting one another by amplifying and corroborating views, submitting the

views of others to critical inquiry, giving reasons to support another's view even if one doesn't agree; taking one another's ideas seriously by responding and encouraging each other to voice their views (Sharp, 1991, p.297).

While the development of moral values is more than simply a list of ideal behaviors, such a list is a step towards identifying the way that all members of a democratic community might act. Of course the creation of an inclusive set of shared values or behaviors in a country such as Canada might be difficult, because of the diversity of religious and cultural beliefs here. However, it is better to move forward with ideals, however utopian, than to not engage in this way of thinking and believing at all. Therefore, tolerance and the fundamental belief in the goodness of all humanity should be simultaneously promoted, in order to make possible a transformational change in the fabric of society.

Summary

A democratic society is nurtured by democratic education and schooling that develops principles for democratic learning to shape moral behavior for lifelong societal and educational engagement. This process is a personal one that must be experienced with the support of one's community. Without understanding how people learn, develop meaning or construct knowledge, further development of this discussion cannot take place. Therefore, looking at the types of experiences that take into account the natural ways that people perform and dramatize in order to communicate and learn is the next step to be taken.

CHAPTER TWO: EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION and LEARNING

We are the learning species, and our survival depends on our ability to adapt not only in the reactive sense of fitting into the physical and social worlds, but in the proactive sense of creating and shaping those worlds...we have cast our lot with learning, and learning will pull us through. But this learning process must be reimbued with the texture of feeling of human experiences shared and interpreted through dialogue with one another. (Kolb, 1984, p.2)

It is in the very nature of human beings to seek interaction with our environment and with others in order to understand, find our place and grow. As Kolb states, our species adapts to the physical and social worlds using learning as a tool to do this. Such a decision highlights the natural tendency of humans to learn from experience and to transform this information into some sort of tangible product or way of doing things. Learning, education and knowledge acquisition exist on a developmental continuum.

For this reason, before considering experiential learning and its theoretical/practical foundations, we must distinguish what education, learning, experience and transformational learning are and how meaning is made from experience...essentially how an individual learns *how to learn*.

Making Distinctions

Defining Learning

It is important to distinguish first of all between learning and education. To begin, the common usage and dictionary derived definition for learning is that it is the experience or process of acquiring knowledge and skills. This means that a learned

person has acquired and internalized a significant amount of knowledge through various methods.

Bateson (1972) and Argyris (1982) as cited in Markos & McWhinney (2003), have developed and written about three levels (L) of inquiry and learning. L1, is simply a form of rote learning where one does not contradict or question what is being taught. L2 is learning that emerges from reflection. This entails a certain level of questioning and leads to the possibility of an individual taking a different direction in life. Finally, L3 is a stage that is not experienced by everyone. It is considered to be a rare kind of learning where an individual experiences *being* in one single moment where all time and space simultaneously exist. Here, learning takes place through a series of events that are not necessarily represented sequentially.

These three different levels of learning are helpful in understanding the uniqueness of each person's learning journey and when considering educational programs and curricula.

Defining Education

The idea of the educated person suggests that individuals have been trained in a particular way related to their society. It includes a process of socialization into cultural norms and values where specific requirements must be achieved.

As Markos & McWhinney (2003) have stated, "Most education today is a process for rearing people to fulfill their proper roles in the existing society, socializing them with language, then teaching them the economics of their society, their role in procreation, and how they should make contributions to society in arts and sciences" (p.20). Depending on the education that one receives, this description of the

educational process has sometimes led to the wry phrase uttered upon graduation from University: I learned despite my education.

Defining Experience

An event which one is cognizant of; an activity that one has performed; or the collection of events and/or activities from which an individual or group may gather knowledge, opinions and skills from is the way that experience can be defined. This means that in order for people to have an experience, they must: have an awareness of what has taken place; be actively involved in a particular activity or participate with a group in an event that enables them to learn. However since there are many different kinds of experiences and many different ways to interpret the same experience there is still a level of uncertainty when accepting any definitive meaning for this word.

When confronted with this very task, John Dewey (1925) concluded that experience was a weasel word with a slippery and inconsistent meaning. Since experiences themselves are difficult to define and can mean different things to different people, some have suggested that in order to take this into account, we should consider one of our own experiences involving another person and how both parties may have different reactions. For instance, I may say a flower is beautiful for its fragrance while someone else may see the same flower and say that since it is yellow it is unattractive because they dislike this color.

Each person also has a personal history that changes the way different people see or interpret the same things. For instance I may state that I like all yellow flowers because they have always smelt nice to me and subsequently, I have learnt to associate nice smells with yellow flowers. Whereas my sister may disagree since she remembers

stopping to smell a yellow flower as a child and being stung by a bee inside of it. This shows how a situation has been created where someone has learnt to avoid or dislike all yellow flowers because of a negative past experience with one.

Sensing, thinking or reflecting on one's reaction to the yellow flower based on learning from prior experiences links together actions and thoughts and shows that these actions are not separate but instead inform one another. Thus a multi-layered interpretation of what was originally described as a singular shared experience (i.e- seeing and reacting to a yellow flower) has a deeper level of meaning than was originally thought and the same experience can have positive and detrimental affects on different people. What happens then when a yellow flower is seen by someone a number of times in one day and there is no reaction at all? In this case, even though there is a stimulus which allows for the possibility of an experience, there is no new learning or reinforcement of prior learning.

When defining experience, one must conclude that learning based on experience is unique to each individual because it is influenced by the sense they make of it based on their unique past.

Defining 'an' Experience

As previously mentioned, when one 'walks by a yellow flower', an endless possible number of options of engaging with it can take place: smelling or avoiding it; talking to someone else about the stimulus and reflecting on their reaction to it; not noticing the flower at all and thus having no experience with it, changing one's natural reaction to the stimulus due to reflection: I am not going to avoid this yellow flower as I usually do because not all yellow flowers have bees in them and my friend told me how

nice they smell. This final illustration is an example of reflection and in some sense, transformational learning, because it is leading the individual to a new insight and way of behaving. However, as also illustrated, this does not always occur. For this reason, experiential education is based on the idea of 'experience in' the learning process.

John Dewey summarizes and makes this distinction between valuable (or quality) educational experiences and experiences that are non or mis-educative in *Art as Experience* (2004). It is his view that 'an' experience has happened when work is completed satisfactorily, e.g., problems find adequate solutions or a game is played to its completion. He also contends that these results must be achieved without any major gaps and lead to 'whatever is next' without difficulty (p.37). This idea of 'an' experience is also described as 'a meaningful experience' in *Experiential Learning: A Best Practice Handbook for Educators and Trainers* (Beard & Wilson 2002).

When we undergo an experience, this does not always lead to new insights and new learning. For example, if the experience only serves to confirm some already held beliefs it will be interpreted as supporting the existing cognitive status quo and little attention will be paid to it. If we do not pay attention to it the opportunity for new learning will not happen. Experience may underpin all learning but it does not always result in learning. We have to engage with the experience and reflect on what happened, how it happened and why (p.20-1).

This quotation supports Dewey's ideas of 'an' experience and the need for reflection in learning in the sense that a certain level of understanding and harmony must be in place for learning to be meaningful. Learning must be an engagement with an experience that includes both reflection and a level of critical consideration.

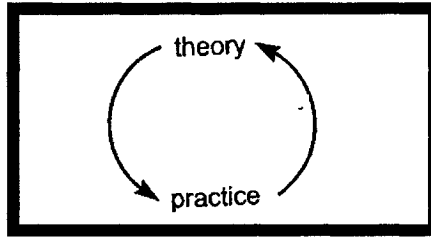


Figure 1: Dewey's Theory & Practice Model (Beard & Wilson, 2002, p. 18)

Figure 1, represents Dewey's suggestion that theory and practice both have to be present and balanced in order for new insights and learning to occur. If a theory does not match a practical experience or vice-versa, one's way of doing things and seeing the world must be revisited.

To summarize the idea that the foundation of a lot of learning is the interaction between the self and the external environment when a process of reflection brings new meanings to another interaction is a way to consider an experience as meaningful. It must also be noted that it is only when a harmonious and meaningful experience has occurred that learning can take place.

Defining experiential learning (EL)

In order to find a way to define experiential learning, McGill & Weill (1989) decided to look at what it was not: their conclusion that EL is not the memorization of abstract theoretical knowledge taught by traditional methods of instruction such as lectures or reading is quite likely the picture most people have in their minds when thinking about what EL *isn't*. However, when taking into consideration some of the prior definitions for learning and experience, one must conclude as Beard & Wilson (2002) have that: experiential learning must be some sort of "...meaningful engagement with the environment in which we use our previous knowledge (itself built from experience) to bring new meanings to an interaction" (p.21).

Other writers in this field have used this concept in contrasting ways. On one hand, the concept is used to describe the way that students are given the opportunity to acquire and apply knowledge, skills and feelings in a relevant setting, signifying that there is a direct encounter with what is being studied so that there is the possibility of 'doing something about it'. Usually this kind of learning takes place at an educational institution in order to complement a particular program of study.

The second type of experiential learning involves one's direct participation in what is happening in one's life. In this sense, learning out of interest occurs through personal daily reflection (<http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-explrn.htm>).

When looking at experiential learning in this way, it becomes apparent that it involves two separate ideas: deriving personal meaning from an experience and being given the opportunity to do this through experiential education. This raises further questions such as how can education help one to make meaning of and essentially learn from experiences and how is knowledge constructed and acquired? Psychologists and philosophers have tried to answer these questions but there are still no absolute answers. However, it is necessary to consider them for the sake of this study.

Knowledge Acquisition, Making Meaning from Experiences & Learning to Learn

Knowledge is generally considered to be 'what is known'. This means that knowledge is acquired through a gradual process in which one must have experiences and understand them through thinking and reasoning. Thus, in order to gain knowledge, one must observe or experience a variety of things in a lifetime. Jean Piaget, a developmental psychologist, suggested and studied the series of psychological changes that occur in humans as they age and identified four main stages in life that individuals go through as

they acquire and process information, learn and subsequently gain knowledge about the world. Since Piaget thought that knowledge was constructed and contingent upon perception and experience, this theory is considered to be “constructivist”.

Since experience is necessary for knowledge construction, the acquisition of knowledge and how to make meaning for future learning becomes an important point of inquiry. Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols, especially in languages. Since, semiotics involves and studies signs meaning must involve the role a particular sign occupies within a particular situation. Simply put, meaning making depends on context. Cognitive psychologists then study the specific ways that information processing, thoughts and thinking based on meaningful experiences allow individuals to deal with their world. Thus, in order to continually make meaning and gain knowledge throughout one’s lifetime, ‘learning to learn’ is an important tool.

Current campaigns for helping an individual learn how to learn maintain that this is a process of discovery that involves a set of principles and skills which when understood and used enables the learner to learn more effectively. This process helps students to discover their own strengths; motivate themselves; understand that they need to take care of their bodies (by getting enough sleep, eating properly etc.) and assist in the development of positive habits that help to improve learning (<http://www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk/projects/L2L>). Perhaps one of the significant reasons for encouraging people to choose to learn for themselves in a meaningful way and provide opportunities for this to happen is because of the transformative potential that learning can have on people and their lives.

Defining Transformative Learning

Beyond the looking glass, in a monastery, through the gate of purgatory, or under the tutelage of a master, there is a liminal space in which education can transform individuals, organizations and societies. There one can get an education distinct from that acquired on the traditional path taken from infancy to majority. An education that is transformative redirects and reenergizes those who pause to reflect on what their lives have been and take on new purposes and perspectives. The transformation begins when a person withdraws from the world of established goals to unlearn, reorient, and choose a fresh path (Markos & McWhinney, 2003, p.16).

The idea of transformation holds with it a sense of dying and rebirth. This is implied above as the authors discuss the movement from one world and way of doing things to another new one. In this sense, rites of passage, changing paradigms or other events that challenge an individual, such as the loss of a loved one or a travel experience, can all be transformative learning events. The moments between the beginning and end of such a journey are identified as liminal spaces by Victor Turner (1969) and are meant to describe a place that is neither 'here' nor 'there' but rather 'betwixt and between'. It is the journey or process of an experience that is of value when one is unsure if one will emerge at the end of it. The theory of transformative learning was first developed by Jack Mezirow (1991) a constructivist who believed that it was up to the individual to learn to become more reflective, open to the opinions of others and accepting of new ideas. He also differentiated between the education of children as a process of socialization and adult learning, seen as a transformative process undertaken in order to

ultimately strengthen one's autonomy through discourse. Transformative learning can be engaged in and assisted by transformative education and teachers.

As described by Mezirow (1991), the reason that adults would choose to participate in the process of transformative learning, perhaps through education, is that they experience a disorienting dilemma. This acts as a catalyst for them to look for some new sort of meaning in their lives so that change might come because of their inquiry. He also mentions that the capacity to engage in transformative learning occurs only in adulthood but that not all adults experience it. This means that the role of the educator is to help adult learners to acquire, if possible, the ability to realize this potential for transformative learning in their own lives. This implies that cognitive development is necessary for transformative learning and at least some education is necessary for the adult to engage in these kinds of educational programs. One might then also conclude that the ability to experience transformative learning and education is an ideal that educators and students should aspire to.

Reviewing the Context

Since I have discussed learning as constructed and dependent on the developmental and cognitive abilities of those involved, the conclusion can be drawn that there is a time and place for particular types of learning and experiences. This raises the question of an age appropriateness or developmental readiness for the type of learning under discussion. Are primary and secondary students able and ready to engage in experiential education programs? It cannot be argued that they are not (generally) able to learn in this way, since this is how nearly everyone acquires knowledge. However, most studies on this topic focus on the adult learner. This leads us to the discussion

specifically related to experiential learning and demands that the question of age appropriateness for such programming be answered.

Theoretical Basis for Experiential Learning

The EL Discussion

In order to establish a theoretical basis for experiential learning and the necessity of providing educational opportunities that foster this way of acquiring knowledge for people of all ages, I will proceed by presenting the experiential learning theory of Carl Rogers; reviewing John Dewey's Theory of Experience; considering David Kolb's Model, its related critiques and then conclude by reviewing some of the more recent additions to this field such as McGill & Weil's (1989) 'four villages' categorization and Beard & Wilson's (2006) 'lock' tool, in order to present a full picture of the theories that have helped to create the concept of experiential learning and education. While some may protest that I have selected certain approaches and authors in my discussion on experiential learning and left other theorists out, I would counter that yes, in fact, I have selected particular theorists and their concepts bearing in mind my own overall goals of how and why I am conducting this inquiry. I believe that those whom I have selected build a foundation for EL and provide the necessary basis for further inquiry when approaching educating experientially.

Experiential Learning Theory (Carl Rogers)

In a very beautiful and grandfatherly way, Carl Rogers, the prolific American psychologist who is considered a significant contributor to the field of adult education for his 'client centered' approach to therapy and theories about learning through experience, uses his own personal stories and experiences to discuss his findings.

In *The Carl Rogers Reader* (1989) and *On Becoming a Person* (1970), Rogers says that it has been his experience that self-discovered learning that is personally appropriated and assimilated in experience is the only real way for one to learn. He then states that one of the best ways to learn is to drop one's defenses, try to understand how another person feels and then confess one's own uncertainties in order to clarify personal doubts and eventually get closer to creating meaning from an experience. This process shows that in order to learn, we must first find a way to feel comfortable with ourselves so that we can allow other people to see their inner and vulnerable selves. After this is achieved, one must 'walk in someone else's shoes' before finally attempting to formulate questions that can be used to learn and make meaning.

The development of this theory is based upon Roger's life as a theorist, practicing psychologist and group facilitator. Also of particular relevance and interest are his beautiful summations about the relationship that must exist between those who facilitate learning and the learner. The true relationship between the teacher and the students is an interaction or sharing between two people. He believes these interpersonal relationships are of the greatest importance for developing human potential and that when a safe and positive self-directed environment is obtained, learning will proceed faster. Interestingly enough, this person-centered approach to facilitate learning is prescribed for students of all ages.

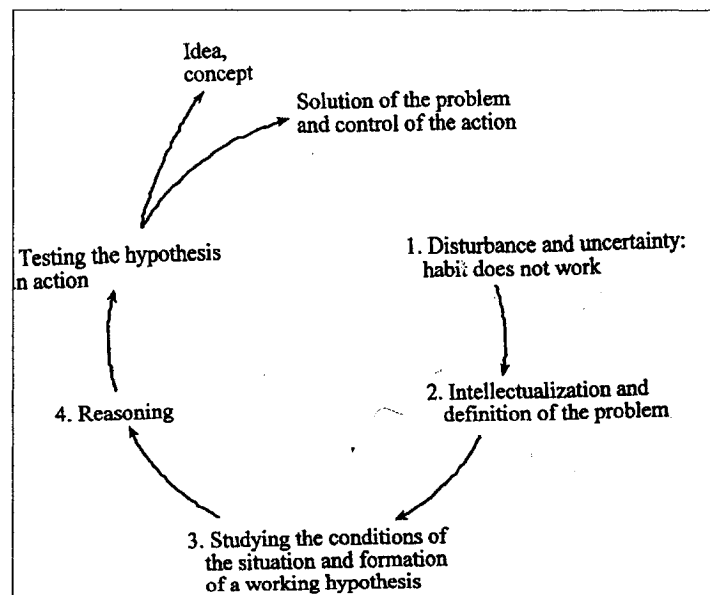
What does this mean? Well, if learning systems were to be set up by Rogers, ultimately there would be no teachers. Instead facilitators would set up safe and positive environments and make resources available for learning that would take the place of traditional classrooms. The intent of education would be one where the process and

facilitation of personal experiences and personally relevant discoveries would emerge instead of ones that focus on knowledge as a 'goal'. Finally, as already suggested, the emotions and feelings of the people involved in these learning environments would be balanced with intellectual learning.

Dewey's Reflective Thought and Action Theory of Experience

For Dewey, daily life is the starting point for his theory of experience- where the absence of reflection following most experiences leads to habit- forming behavior. It is when these habits no longer work, because a problem or crisis emerges causing one to engage in reflective thought about the situation, that the growth of knowledge and eventually action is realized. Ideas that are generated by reflection can only be realized through experiential activity.

Figure 2: Dewey's Model of Reflective Thought and Action (Dewey, 1925)



As seen in this model, Dewey believes that all aspects of reflective thought and action are interconnected. In *Experience and Nature* (1925), he writes that one of the reasons for reflection is to develop a consciousness of the layers of meaning that over

time have found their way into how we see and give meaning to the symbols that exist in our lives. As stated in Miettinen (2000), this means that the central issue in Dewey's concept is whether or not routine ways of thinking can be replaced by reflective ones. In order to understand a little bit better how Dewey's model works, I will consider each step individually.

1. Disturbance and uncertainty: habit does not work

The first step of the reflection, thought and action process suggests a disruption in the routine way of doing things where habit without reflection normally takes place. This disturbance is within the realm of human activity and relates to one's regular activities. Since there is a sort of hesitation in the normal flow of activity because of the uncertainty, thinking and reflective thought have the opportunity to occur.

2. Intellectualization and definition of the problem

Defining the problem is the next step in this process. It is essential to do this since without any clear idea of what has gone wrong, there will be no way to understand how to proceed.

3. Studying the conditions of the situation and formation of a working hypothesis

In the third stage, one considers the whole situation and what the solution or resolution to the identified problem might be. This is called developing a hypothesis and functions as a plan of action. There are no definitive problems or hypotheses at this time: as in the scientific process there are merely tentative guides that may be proved or disproved based upon further inquiry.

4. Reasoning

Reasoning or thought experiments occur in order to describe whether or not the original problem and hypothesis are worth testing. If after consideration, either of the two previous steps are judged to be inadequate, one can redefine the problem and begin again.

5. Testing the hypothesis in action

If, on the other hand, the preliminary reasoning holds weight, one can proceed with the testing of the hypothesis.

Upon this view, thinking, or knowledge-getting, is far from being the armchair thing it is often supposed to be...Hands and feet, apparatus and appliances of all kinds are as much a part of it as changes in the brain. Since these physical operations (including the cerebral events) and equipments are a part of thinking, thinking is mental, not because of a peculiar stuff which enters into it or of peculiar non-natural activities which constitute it, but because of what physical acts and appliances do: the distinctive purpose for which they are employed and the distinctive results which they accomplish.

(Dewey, 1985, p. 328).

As discussed above, the testing of the hypothesis involves an individual's body and mind engaged together. From this experience of testing a hypothesis, one of two things can occur: either a solution can be found to the problem or a new idea that holds relative meaning will emerge.

6. Either an idea or concept emerges or a solution to a problem and control of the action is made

In any case, both results allow an individual to continue in life with a new and greater understanding based upon reflection and experience. This also leads one to the conclusion that in order for new conceptions to be made and thus learning to occur one must regularly be involved through practical activities. Simply put, to learn is to reflect on meaningful experience.

Kolb's model

David Kolb's classic work *Experiential Learning* (1984) presents what has been widely considered to be the foundation for experiential learning and has regularly been used as a source of reference in the field.

Originally written as a way to argue for the utility of the authors Learning Style Inventory (in the 1960's), Kolb et al. first presented the EL model in *Organizational Psychology* (1971). Here the idea of recognizing one's own style of learning and developing a learning profile enabling one to choose from one's own unique set of learning abilities that could later be applied to different situations is presented (p.28).

Kolb begins by looking at the historical roots of EL and how this theory is based on the primary legacies and findings of John Dewey's observation- knowledge- judgment process for learning, Kurt Lewin's feedback process and Jean Piaget's work on assimilation and accommodation (p.4-19). Once he outlines the theories of these three contributors he turns his attention to Carl Jung, Erik Ericson, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich who also contributed to his theory. At this time, I will provide an overview of Lewin and Piaget's theories that influenced Kolb. (I have not included a section on Dewey because of the discussion on his work included in the

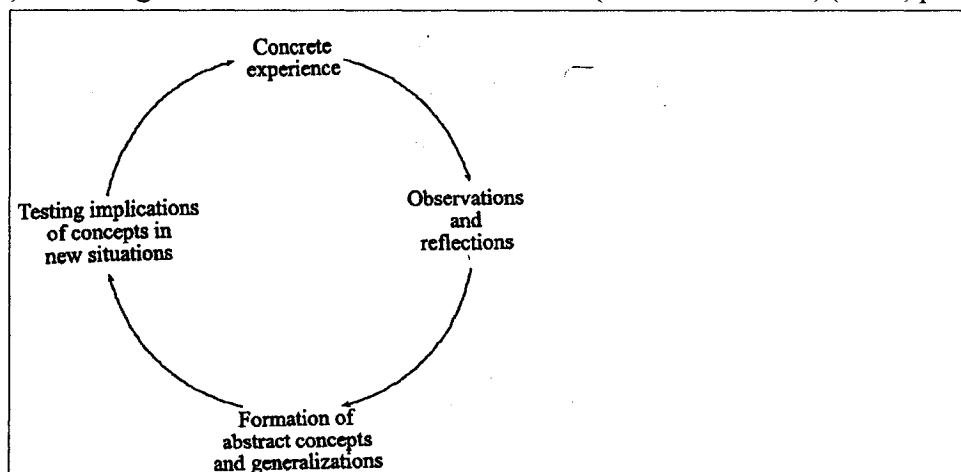
previous section). After I have considered Kolb's primary influences, I will describe his model and some criticism of it.

While Lewin has influenced a wide range of theories and types of research, I will focus on his T-groups and their facilitation as they most closely influenced the theory of experiential learning. These sessions began in association with colleagues during a two week program in leadership and group training and were designed to encourage group discussion and decision making where both participants and leaders treated one another as peers (Smith, 2001).

As research was also a part of the event, the trainers and researchers collected data and met each day to discuss their observation and findings. It was when one of the participants asked to be a part of these sessions and disagreed with the interpretation that was made about her observed behavior that discussions and reinterpretations emerged. This active dialogue...interpretations helped to establish innovation in training practices. (Yalom, 1985, p.489)

When trainees began to participate in the discussion groups, feedback became a part of the whole process. This feedback process was identified by Kolb during the development of his experiential learning theory and presented (as seen in the following Figure 3).

Figure 3: Lewinian Feedback Model (Beard & Wilson, (2002, p. 32)



As one can see, this feedback process involves concrete experience, observation and reflection, the formation of abstract concepts and then the testing of concepts in new situations. When Lewinian model (Figure 3) is placed next to Kolb's experiential learning cycle (see Figure 4) one notices an almost identical model.

Piaget's theories of cognitive stages as well as his ideas about assimilation (or what you do when new information is received) and accommodation (what you do when based on undeniable information, you change an existing schema) influenced the development of Kolb's model. Specifically, Piaget states that there are four stages for development: the sensori-motor stage, the preoperational stage, the concrete operational stage and the formal operational stage. The chart below provides an overview of each of these stages.

Chart 1: Piaget's Description of Developmental Stages (Elias et al., 2004, p. 500-506)

STAGES	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Sensorimotor (0-2 years)	*Object permanence *Beginning of the capacity to use mental images and symbols
Preoperational (2-7 years)	*Accelerated use of symbols and language
Concrete Operations (7-12 years)	*Understanding of conservation *Understanding of identity *Understanding of serial ordering
Formal Operations (12 years onward)	*Abstract reasoning *Ability to compare and classify ideas

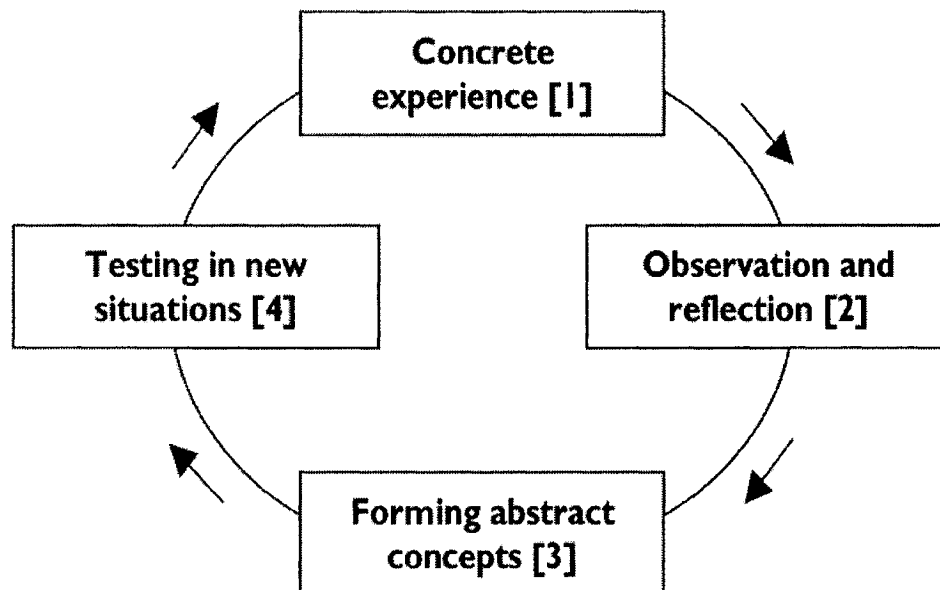
While the overall point of this work shows that the ability to reason and deal with new experiences and learning depends upon the emergence of previous ones, some of the new views of cognitive development hold that Piaget's stages are not really distinct steps but, rather, overlapping waves. Another point of contention suggests that since he did not

account for the effects of education and culture on the development of the child and not all adults reach the formal operational stage of development there is some need for revision in his theory (Elias et al, 2004, p.500-506). This description brings us to Kolb's model and how Piaget, Lewin and Dewey's influenced its creation.

Kolb's approach to creating an experiential model and method is called an eclectic one by Miettinen (2000) since it "...unites terms and concepts, extracting them from their idea-historical contexts and purposes and puts them to serve the motives of his own presentation" (p. 56). In most ways I would agree that most of Kolb's model is borrowed from other theorists. It actually seems that he has taken the Lewinian model and simply renamed some of the steps. Perhaps this is why Kolb calls his model a Lewinian one.

When he later contends that the steps in Lewin's model are basically the same as John Dewey's and he ends up using Dewey's concept of reflection and action as a justification for his model, (since both Kolb and Lewin's models are essentially discussing the same process that Dewey proposes), it begins to appear as though Kolb is not really interested in critically considering these theories but, rather just wants to repackage them. Perhaps this is what has led to widespread criticism of his model and theory.

Figure 4 : Kolb's Experiential Learning Model (Smith, 2001)



Critique's of Kolb's Model

Here are the key problems with Kolb's experiential learning model that have been suggested by a variety of theorists:

In Beard & Wilson (2002), *Corn circles in search of a spaceship?* (Taylor, 1991) a summary of some of the limitations of 'circle models' is presented where the simplistic circle model appears to have been established as a fad that sacrifices complexity and depth for accessibility. Unfortunately, this is exactly what Kolb's circle model of learning exemplifies.

Holman et al. (1997) comment that the process of learning illustrated here does not take into account that learning can be considered as a process of argumentation where thinking, reflecting, experiencing and action are different aspects of the same process and that when engaged in such a process with oneself or with others, the formation of the

basis for learning cannot occur because the circle model just accounts for one thing leading to the next in a systematic way (p. 145).

One of the main criticisms of Kolb's model is presented in the paper *The concept of experiential learning and John Dewey's theory of thought and reflective action* by Reijo Miettinen (2000). Miettinen rejects Kolb's four stage model saying that Kolb ineffectively links the ideas of Lewin's action research T-group training and its feedback sessions with John Dewey's work on reflective thought and action and that experiential learning itself is an inadequate way to gain knowledge of the world (p. 54). In fact, Miettinen says that Kolb misinterpreted Lewin's work and based his ideas of reflection on an interpretation of Lewin's model that was described by Lippit (1949).

Comparing the works of Dewey and Kolb, we conclude that Kolb did not spend enough time taking into account Dewey's concept of habit, the fact that we all do the same things repeatedly over our lifetimes, and that there are both necessary and problematic reasons for this. From my understanding, the main problem with Kolb's model and theory is that it does not account for the habitual activities one has in life; and implies that one is always going to be engaged in one of the four stages described in his Experiential Learning Model. The problem with this is that, as Dewey has pointed out, much of our daily lives are not spent learning new information.

Kolb too, is criticized for placing insufficient emphasis on cultural differences and experiences. In a sense, my paper has not taken into account these differences and reflects the Eurocentric view that permeates the literature on this subject. Vygotsky's Theory of Sociocultural Influences describes how children develop mental representations of the world through culture and language; and once they have acquired

language, then culture and schooling play a major part in how they will learn and develop (Elias et al, 2004, p.502).

This also means that due to some of the learning differences, preferences or predispositions that exist in different cultures the type of experiential learning, knowledge development and meaning making that has been described may have to be altered depending on the backgrounds of the participants. This consideration leads one to examine whether experiential learning is a viable tool for teaching at all, in a place like Canada, where there are a variety of cultural groups in a classroom. Thus, not simply critiques of Kolb's model must be considered at this time but also, two of the main criticisms associated with experiential learning as a concept.

Critiques of Experiential Learning

Most of the critics of EL state that the emphasis on the experience that a student has and the personal freedom given to individuals to create their own awareness, learning, discoveries etc. lead to a watering down of the standard or core curriculum. Concerns that self- directed learning may lead to isolation individualism and poor learning are also stated. Within the field of adult education, where EL is popular, these concerns are countered by the argument that adult learning is not solely about helping learners to grow in whatever direction they choose but is, instead, a place where individual areas of learning are catered to within clearly defined and negotiated projects (Beard & Wilson, 2002).

The second concern about experiential learning being subjective is probably true in my opinion. As discussed earlier, individuals bring their own history, emotions and interpretations to their learning. So, in this respect, all learning is subjective since no two

people will take the exact same thing away from a situation, whether that be a lecture or experiential activity. An attempt to measure learning so that the same material or information is covered by the greatest number of people has been attempted through testing practices in the traditional classroom.

Numerous discussions as to the feasibility of this approach are currently taking place. Additionally, social measures (e.g. following particular rules forbidding behavior that is harmful to oneself or others) are determined by society. No matter how subjective EL might seem to be, there is always a societal framework that guides human actions and interactions. So, even though there are restrictions based on experiential learning itself, they can be described as insubstantial. Developing concerns surrounding the experiential model for experiential learning developed by David Kolb are significant.

Thus, new theorists have attempted to create their own ways of categorizing and organizing experiential learning as follows:

Although experiential or experience-based learning can be regarded as the earliest approach to learning for the human race, the significance and potential of it has not been fully recognized until relatively recently. In the formal educational system it has tended to be devalued and regarded as somehow fundamentally inferior to those organized forms of knowledge which have been constructed as subjects or disciplines. (Boud, 1989, p. xiii)

Other EL theories

McGill & Weil in 1989 at the first international conference on experiential learning explained what experiential learning meant to them. There were many different ideas of what experiential learning was and how it was practiced. In order to find a way

to distinguish these distinct and different identifications of experiential learning, four distinct ‘villages’ were identified as a way to recognize and access the various aims and objectives for those people, governments and professional institutions who identified with this idea.

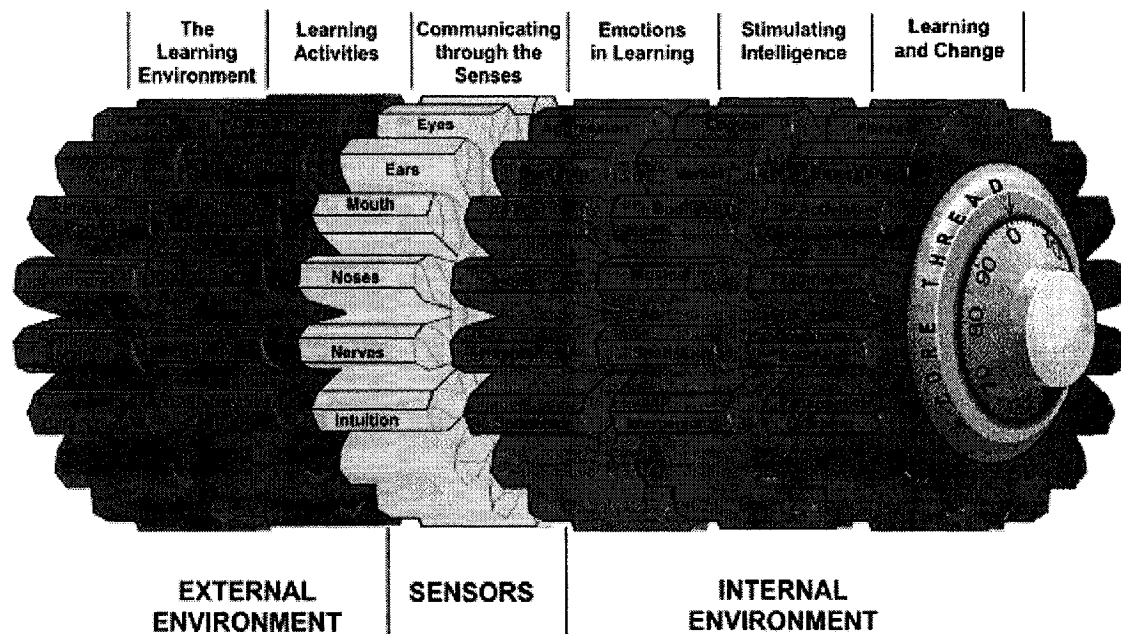
One village is clearly identified around the assessment and accreditation of prior experiential learning as a means of gaining access and recognition to educational institutions, employment and professional bodies. A second village is the place for those who centre their activities on changing the practice, structures and purposes of post-school education. Another village can be identified among those who place learning from experience as the core of education for social change mainly outside educational institutions. Finally, there is the village where there is a focus on the potential and practice of personal growth and development. There are undoubtedly overlaps between these ‘villages’ and nuances of difference within the villages. (McGill & Weil, 1989, p.xiv)

This description as well as some of the discussions about experiential learning are recorded in their book *Making Sense of Experiential Learning: diversity in theory and practice* (1989). Here EL is seen as theory, a way to know oneself, a technique for use in professional learning, a transformative force for societal change and a vehicle that can be used for creating dialogue. This may at first seem to add confusion to the already lengthy discussion. However, if one is to focus on the particular village that these theorists primarily relate to, then a more focused and developed effort can take place within the larger and more general experiential discussion when the villages “come back to meet with one another”. I am in favor of this approach since it seems to come from the whole

EL community. When reading various chapters of this book a variety of approaches and experiences with experiential learning describe a level of acceptance and openness to a diverse set of theories and practices that almost seem to resist at all costs the “product” of a model for EL. McGill & Weil establish an almost refreshing and wholesome tone to the movement.

Unfortunately, my immediate feeling about the proposal for a new model or ‘diagnostic tool’ by Beard and Wilson, to use for experiential learning, is one of skepticism. I suspect that the combination lock proposed by Beard & Wilson as the new simple model that takes the form of multiple and moving circles is no more than a new take on the previous “circle model fad” going wrong again.

Figure 5: Beard & Wilson’s Diagnostic Lock Tool for Experiential Learning (Beard & Wilson, 2002, p. 4)



Nonetheless, Beard and Wilson tirelessly go through the process of naming the various components of what they call ‘tumblers’ and describing each element in its turn. These tumblers are named on the top of the lock and the basic idea is that when the lock is moved, the sensors, indicated near the centre of the model, will notice the changes and respond. Though overall, this model is well thought out when described in their book *Experiential Learning: A Best Practice Guide for Educators and Trainers* (2002), I still suspect that it is not the best manual for an educator or trainer who wants, for the first time, to ‘throw some experiential learning into their program’. This is because their charts and lists that present overviews of the theorists, techniques and instructions that contribute to their theoretical basis, offer little description and support for the implementation of their proposals. Perhaps, if a week long training course were provided where the ideas in this book were experienced by those who wanted to use, teach or facilitate experiential programs, this book and its model would be more useful.

Good Practices and new directions

Experiential learning differs from conventional teaching in several extremely important aspects. It stresses giving the learner a multiplicity of experiences, rather than instructing them by lecturing or reading. It involves stimulating them to thought and action. It emphasizes learning and activities which are relevant to the person’s life (Berger & Karlin, 1971, p.21).

There are limitations with EL just as there are limitations with all approaches to learning, educating and life. In the case of EL, I still believe that the possibilities that it can provide for the learner such as the multiplicity of experiences, stimulation to thought and action, and the provision of activities relevant to the learner’s life, outweigh the

alternatives. For this reason, the ‘best practices’ of: finding balance; using ethical practitioners; setting a climate and conditions for caring in the learning environment; setting ground rules for using EL; considering how to establish or select the best possible environment (indoors or outdoors etc.) to work in; and using activities that maximize the potential for a positive learning outcome are important when including EL in education and for learning.

When considering ‘the best or most balanced way’ to approach EL, a thorough discussion must occur, since the best ways to develop a well - rounded program widely vary. For example, Dewey’s conception of balance in *Experience & Education* (1997) and *Art as Experience* (2005) is seen in relation to a learning experience where continuity and interaction intercept and unite as the experiences of one’s world emerge (Dewey, 2005, p.44). Dewey goes on to describe how “(l)ife itself consists of phases in which the organism falls out of step with the march of surrounding things and then recovers unison with it - either through effort or by some happy chance” (Dewey, 1997, p.12). In this description is a temporary state in which everyone (or thing) dwells while waiting for the restoration of balance. In order to translate this to learning and the current discussion, consider an exhilarating experience like climbing a mountain that brings with it intense clarity and peace; once it is over and one is ‘back on the ground’ a feeling of let-down may ensue.

Crucial for the educator then, is the processing of such an experience through a learning format that can be transformed into a working knowledge before, during and after such an event so that balance can be maintained and restored with minimal negative side effects for the learner (DiConti, 2004, p.7). The ethical behavior of the

facilitator/educator/leader then must also be balanced since it is sometimes easier to neglect a balanced program in favor of a 'fun' time that may not meet the needs of all of those involved or the requirements of the curriculum, the safety of the participants or the aims of the organizations who offer to assist with EL activities.

For this reason, in order to maintain the integrity of programming not only a strong theoretical base must be in place but, the commitment and comprehensive training of the leaders must be stringently monitored. In order to help maintain some of these standards in the UK, bodies have been set up by the government to examine how professional integrity, responsibility, relationships, standards and cultural/environmental responsibilities are met and maintained. There is also always the possibility of encouraging current professional standards of practice such as those set out by the Ontario College of Teachers who include in their programs the training and certification of the EL teacher.

As is important in any learning situation, setting the climate and conditions within which learning will occur is extremely important. While there is not necessarily a magic recipe for creating a climate of caring that will work in all situations there have been some efforts in this direction. I prefer to create this list of shared values together with my group since it then establishes a climate of caring and community which everyone is a part of and responsible for maintaining. Not surprisingly, most lists turn out to be relatively similar and include things such as: working together; listening to one another; having fun; participating; sharing oneself, etc.

Indoor and outdoor environments

There is still no definitive answer as to whether or not an outdoor or indoor environment is better for learning. However, the choice does oftentimes help to narrow or expand the types of activities that are executed and participated in, e.g., compass work, hiking, winter camping, cooking outdoors, building fires, canoeing and portaging, participating in high ropes courses, learning to tie knots, participating in group challenge activities of low to high levels of risk.

Some of the experiences ‘assumed’ to be indoor classroom activities (reading and by-rote learning) do not take into account the changing image of both the indoor and outdoor learning environments. The ‘metamorphosis’ occurring within the indoor environment is happening where there has been a “...change of label, from ‘classrooms’ to ‘learning spaces’...(so that) future learning spaces will provide greater flexibility and mobility of people, knowledge, furniture and other artifacts...since (p)hysical issues such as furnishings, air quality and acoustics, lighting and color clearly impact learning” (Beard & Wilson, 2002, p.80-1). This underdeveloped ‘pedagogy of space’ is perhaps the next area that will be considered when curricular reforms such as those taking place in Quebec, Canada are made. Even technology is sure to be built into classroom design. As time goes on we will see the incorporation there of not only computers but virtual imaging capabilities and multi-media operational technology.

On the other hand, outdoor environments have a history of creating a place for people to learn in a profound way about themselves and others. Perhaps because not everyone is comfortable in outdoor spaces, learners interact with other learners, their teachers and the space in very different ways than they would indoors. Many

transformational learning examples credit the outdoor location of desert or mountaintop as part of the reason that a particular experience occurred and had the effect that it did.

Summary

To conclude, this chapter has looked at experiential learning as the optimal way for an individual to learn and develop the principles of democratic learning for purposes of community, communication, and participation. This discussion has also questioned whether or not experiential learning is a viable and preferred mode to acquire knowledge and develop the skills for learning how to learn. Learning to learn is a valuable skill since it makes possible personal transformation through reflection and action.

Since a variety of theories exist for supporting experiential learning and since the most popular Experiential Learning Model developed by Kolb has been shown to have a number of inconsistencies in its structural basis, basing any new programs on this particular learning model is not advisable. Instead, experiential learning can be simply thought of as a natural process that stresses providing the learner with a multiplicity of experiences. Given the natural tendencies of men and women to interact, rehearse and perform tasks, in addition to the participatory nature of democratic learning, suggests that the next step is to link experiential and democratic learning with schooling and education. Looking at where drama and theatre currently stand within the existing educational system, is the place to begin. A note should also be made that recognizes the fact that a singular definition for experiential learning that can always be brought to mind has not been made. The absence of a one-size-fits-all approach for the classification of this type of learning, rather than a problem, allows for a level of flexibility within the field and for

the context specific clarifications that need to be made when this approach to learning is being discussed.

CHAPTER THREE: THEATRE, DRAMA AND ART IN EDUCATION

Aesthetic Education

Worth mentioning at this time is the work being done in Aesthetic Education. This is an inquiry driven engagement with any kind of art that is seen as having the potential to bring about change. There are a series of steps involved in this field “...based on the premise that our understanding of the arts can only be enriched when we actually work with the raw materials of music, dance and drama...” because such experiences “...allow us to feel more, to sense more, to be more consciously in the world” (Samson, 2006, p. 72). In this way, aesthetic education necessitates and links the process of change, or learning, to the experiential art class. In Patricia Goldblatt’s *How John Dewey’s Theories Underpin Art and Art Education* (2006), the paradox existing between the need for appreciating and experiencing art as a catalyst for actions and discussion is given consideration. This provides a link between drama and theatre in education as a way to learn experientially.

The nature of Art as Experience: Linking Experiential Learning with Theatre and Drama in Education

For Dewey, art functions as experience. Processes of inquiry, looking and finding meaning are transformative, extending connections with what is good and right. Expanded perceptions open venues for understanding and action. Attention to detail excite potential for meaning, yielding important societal insights, previously taken for granted. (Goldblatt, 2006, p.17)

If, as suggested, art functions as experience, one can state that it has the potential for becoming *an* experience that brings about change and leads to the kind of

transformative learning that exists beyond the realm of the physical. This means that all art has the ability to compel its viewers to action as it communicates social awareness. In this way art is not only experience, it is by nature democratic in its fostering of self-development, societal critique and dialogue. Perhaps little more than thoughts at this time, these inquiries are part of the reason for continuing to support and expand the work being done in Aesthetic Education as it relates to other educational goals. If further work is to be done in this area, considering where theatre and drama are situated in the educational context is necessary.

It is when the nature of drama as process oriented and theatre as product oriented are considered that their transformative potential for the individual and society can be discussed. Thus, the suggestion that they should reclaim their natural and rightful places at the heart of all school curricula will eventually be made. Theatre in Education, Learning through the Arts, Theatre for Young Audiences and Creative, Developmental and Social Drama initiatives are all examples of programs that have required conscientious preparation for their success. This has occurred through teaching and learning practices based upon human communication and interaction. Specific examples of drama and theatre tools that must be experienced to be learned, and that also follow the principles for democratic learning will be presented in order to prove that art is experience and results in learning. The use of dialogue rather than monologue in the classroom will be presented as a precursor to dramatic and theatre based work in education emphasizing the use of democratic learning principles at the heart of art in education. By considering art as a tool for experiential and democratic learning the

conclusion that will be drawn eventually is that art, specifically drama and theatre, needs to be referred to in educational discussions as critical pedagogies.

Drama

When distinguishing between drama and theatre, the main difference is that drama does not focus on a performance or a 'product' for its outcome. Instead, the acting out, and subsequent discussion of a piece of writing or text, is its ultimate focus. This provides endless potential for practical educational applications and hints at the existing link between drama, democratic principles and experiential learning. This most human of processes transforms imagination into action and is based on one's thoughts and feelings, which in order to be fully understood must be embodied and discussed. 'Putting yourself in someone else's shoes' has the potential to create a sense of meaning about the world, others and oneself.

Drama in Education: Drama Education in Canada

Typically, English speaking Canada follows the British approach to Drama Education which recognizes drama as spontaneous play and improvisation at the elementary and secondary levels. It first became a part of the British education system in the 1950's-60's and later spread to Canada and the United States. Thus, over the past forty years, drama has taken root in Canadian schools. Developmental Drama that looks at how one can work towards developing the self was a movement headed up by Peter Slade and Brian Way in Britain. After a period of time, this led to the Creative Drama approach that focused on using art in a specific context to concentrate on the needs of students and their society as a starting point for work. Finally, drama as a socially

transformative force as seen in the work of Augusto Boal has within the last fifteen years or so been added as a tool for use in our schools.

The way that drama is used in Canadian schools varies greatly. Some teach drama as a subject or elective concentrating on one of the aforementioned functions of drama; others simply integrate dramatic techniques such as role-play into other subject areas. More often than not, drama is seen as a frill or 'fun' activity. Sometimes, drama is identified as theatre an out – of - school activity that is not part of the curriculum at all. The idiosyncratic nature of Canada's regionally based drama and theatre programs, drama educators and professional theatre companies who specialize in children's theatre find themselves in a kind of limbo.

This is especially the case as we are at a time where the needs of the economy are demanding the development of technological skills from schools that get less and less funding for 'essential' programs. This means that without strong art advocates, drama and the arts may be neglected or viewed as non-essential. Perhaps, this signifies that the very nature of human beings who once participated with fervor in collective dramatic rituals in order to communicate and knit together their communities is changing. Perhaps the 21st Century technological age will succeed in separating human beings from the natural spontaneous, improvised acts in which we learn to express our inner lives by making meaning through 'doing' or 'playing'. Or maybe with luck, the revival and creation of community drama and theatre for empowerment initiatives sprouting up the world over will remind us of the longstanding dramatic history that carries with it a memory of the forgotten and collective human spirit: a spirit that calls out from the past reminding us all of the dramatic and playful parts deep within.

To substantiate this consideration for learning by doing and through dramatic play, let us look to John Dewey's (1997) proposal:

(where) the primary root of all educative activity is in the instinctive, impulsive attitudes and activities of the child, and not in the presentation and application of external material, whether through the ideas of other or through the senses; and that, accordingly, numberless spontaneous activities of children, plays, games, mimic efforts...are capable of education use, nay, are the foundation-stones of educational methods. (p.17)

Complementary to this suggestion is the method of teaching English established by Caldwell Cook (1919) in *The Play Way*. He based his ideas on three principles:

1. Proficiency and learning come not from reading and listening but from action, from doing, and from experience.
2. Good work is more often the result of spontaneous effort and free effort than of compulsion and forced application.
3. The natural means of study in youth is play (p.36).

In these two examples first conceived over 100 years ago, experience and learning through playing or doing is encouraged. Yet, there is still a 'dragging of feet' by not only administrators, parents, school boards and curriculum developers but by teachers themselves. There is a great potential for Canadian educators and schools to choose to be groundbreakers in their approach to drama in education by infusing classes with the spontaneous and experientially based dramatic play that life is made of, instead of continuing to take the 'wait and see what other countries have done with this art thing' attitude that exists currently.

There is an especially strong potential for this to happen as seen in the recent push within the Canadian pre-service teacher education programs and in educational reforms such as the one being established in Quebec, Canada. Here, one of the aims is helping students learn by engaging in experiential tasks such as group learning situations in order to develop a series of cross curricular competencies. Since there is a lapse between the production of a theoretical document and its implementation, results of this approach in English Quebec are still being considered. However, in Ontario's educational reform and curricular documents written in 1998, some noticeable gaps are evident in relation to the arts. This is apparent when programs such as drama are 'required' in the Ontario grades 1-8 elementary school curricular documents on The Arts, but not all of the disciplines are being taught in all University B-Ed programs.

This inconsistency impacts the drama education of students since it is difficult for teachers to teach a subject well without receiving any training in the field. This is especially true of drama programs that are sometimes perceived-to-be 'hands off'. Perhaps this is because they require moving beyond the typical students-in-their-seats-listening-to-the-teacher format of subjects such as math which have traditionally been taught in this manner. For this reason, teachers need not only to risk letting go of direct control in the classroom, University programs must stand behind their provincial curricular documents and value drama and its place in the schools just as much as any other subject. Brian Way (1967) contends "the most important single factor in the use of drama as a genuine part of education is the teacher. It would be preposterous to pretend that a teacher needs no preparation for doing drama" (p.8).

Why drama in education?

Yet, why should drama be infused into all classes and programs especially when it is something that is such a part of the natural interactions of people? To answer this question, I turn to one of the leaders in the drama and education literature, Gavin Bolton, who suggests in *drama as education: an argument for placing drama at the centre of the curriculum* (1984) that: "...play, games and drama have the same structural basis, that in a sense bring order to the randomness of day-to-day living, as they build on structures embedded in our real social interactions...(while) allowing for a negotiation of whatever the 'rules' (of the activity happen to be) (p.81)".

Drama uses structure and rules that must be learned and respected in order to function; just as games, sports, families, organizations and societies do. Bolton accounts for the need to teach drama and classroom educators about dramatic structure by creating a manual to help them plan drama projects that are based on their pre – existing classroom practices. The creation of such a manual was made to help teachers structure their drama classroom activities in the same way that they organized their other subjects. As I have mentioned earlier, it is my opinion that teaching teachers the dramatic techniques, structures and skills to use in their own classrooms, results in a more effective and successful drama program. When done in a safe environment where 'teacher-students' feel comfortable trying out some of the dramatic activities and games, positive results are inevitable. By actually participating in the activities themselves, teachers will not only realize that planning a drama lesson or incorporating it into any other subject

area is easy, but that it is an effective way for helping students to learn and engage with required curriculum.

When executed properly, drama and play also have the effect of providing structure and teaching students about it because there are guidelines and instructions that accompany a variety of theatre and drama games. Various dramatic scenarios that require listening, dialoguing, "... group trust, focusing attention, self-esteem, being open to criticism, having a willingness to discuss with integrity and a respect for others opinions" (Bolton, 1984, p.152) also foster the development of democratic learning. Setting out boundaries and rules for particular activities before using them in the classroom shows students without 'teaching' them, that they must use the structure of the activity to find success and ultimately develop a common understanding in order to work together.

As one can see, drama in education does not create, produce and put on a play of professional quality. Rather, it focuses on the process during a drama session that is of the greatest significance.

Drama as Process Oriented

Unlike the theatre production, the process of drama "...combines kinesthetic, emotional and intellectual involvements in improvisational activities to promote a range of experiences. This process oriented nature implies that it is non - exhibitional and is done for the benefit of the participants rather than for an audience" (Grady, 1992, p.15). Since the focus of dramatic activities are for the benefit of the participants rather than for an audience, time and tasks can be created in such a class in order to cater to the needs and strengths of those involved. The potential to unlock and provide students with the opportunity to change themselves for the better is a key part of education and learning.

With so many other 'subjects' that students must constantly be told 'they have to learn because its important for them to do so', it only makes sense to give them something which is for them and their own developmental, creative and social processes alone. Theatre, while of significance for educational programs, usually places more of a focus on the product or play as the point of its undertaking.

Theatre

In the simplest terms, theatre is a rehearsed and polished performance, of some sort, presented to an audience. The intention can vary from entertaining the audience to presenting social or political messages for future thought and consideration. Within the educational context, there are definite goals for theatre and its purpose for young audiences.

Theatre in Education

Theatre in Education (TIE) began in Belgrade Theatre, Coventry (Britain) in 1965 as a series of pilot projects created in response to the needs of the theatre, community and schools there. This national program is now supported by not only theatre companies and government subsidies but by art boards, regional communities and the country as a whole. TIE's basic aim is to take the "...techniques and imaginative potency of theatre in the service of education...led by the personnel of these companies, usually known as, 'actor-teachers' ...to re-establish the theatre's roots in the community" (Jackson, 1993, p.3). This is done by providing a stimulating, challenging and provocative experience for the students while dealing with a series of subjects. The program is not about presenting a play for students. What makes this initiative unique is that it is a:

...co-ordinated and carefully structured pattern of activities, usually devised and researched by the company, around a topic of relevance both to the school curriculum and to the children's own lives, presented in a school by the company and involving the children directly in an experience of the situations and problems that the topic throws up. It generally utilizes...traditional theatre elements (actors in role and the use of scripted dialogue, costume and often scenic and special effects); educational drama (active participation of the children, in or out of role); and simulation (highly structured role play and decision making exercises within simulated real life situations). (Jackson, 1993, p.4)

This shows how the TIE movement is not only about presenting a play to students. Rather it aims at developing a cooperative learning environment for everyone involved where direct experience and participation in issues that affect them all can develop a broader sense of community. TIE teams of 10-12 people usually working actors, are normally linked with established theatre companies. One exciting aspect of the TIE movement that has experienced a series of changes, challenges and successes since it first began over 40 years ago, includes the dynamic presentation of the school curriculum using theatre. Direct student involvement and the sharing of ideas through participatory action between the actor - teacher, community, schools, classroom teachers and students are the contributions of this form of theatre. While there is no one specific pattern or formula for TIE teams, many have adopted a series of steps in the delivery of the program. First an introductory teachers' workshop is given, in order to discuss the potential topics, aims of the program and the teacher's role. Then, notes are provided containing relevant research material that teachers can use in the class. Once the

company has their show together it is presented in the school involving the children directly in a variety of ways. Finally, feedback forms are distributed to the teachers in order to maintain a close liason between the company and the school.

Direct student participation within the school community and performances that are created using this method are oftentimes based upon local issues of direct concern for the target audience. While there is no national curriculum for theatre and drama in Canada, there have been and continue to be some programs that have their roots based in the TIE idea. Of course, learning through theatre is not a new idea. Herman Voaden, a teacher and playwright in the 1930's and 40's, used theatre at a large secondary school in downtown Toronto in order to complement the staging of his writings about the natural beauties of Canada (Fairhead, 1993, p.151).

Learning through Theatre and the Arts (LTTA)

Ontario's Learning through the Arts Program (LTTA) is a more recent initiative that is in some ways similar to TIE. This program primarily funded by the Royal Conservatory of Music with the support of local School Boards, connects a professional artist from the community with an elementary classroom. This artist-educator is called upon to teach a core subject to a particular class. Students participate and create their own art focusing on a particular subject and theme. Examples of LTTA activities are, writing and performing songs in history that incorporate in their lyrics particular historical occurrences like the fur trade or making 3-D models of cells in biology class. These are later used to create interactive computer-based programs depicting the relationship of the cell to the body.

One of the LTTA sessions that I taught was a Grade 3 mathematics unit on measurement, included were the concepts of: the seasons; a second, a minute, an interval of five minutes; and the measurement of selected items without rulers or standard units of measure. Even simple theatre warm up games turned into learning opportunities when I concluded with time for discussion and reflection. By the third session, I actually had students bring me work they had done at home based on some of my exercises. It was amazing to see the results of simply giving these third graders a little bit of freedom to explore and imagine the ways they perceived their environment.

Other artists in British Columbia continue to do similar work in inner-city Vancouver classrooms using ‘found objects’ such as discarded water bottles, corks or string to make puppets and plays about recycling and the environment. Though somewhat different from the form of TIE in Britain, Canada’s LTTA program shares the approach that the school must offer an experimental atmosphere where form and different ways of actively engaging students in their own learning can take place.

Theatre for Young Audiences

Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) is another approach to adding theatre to the lives of young people within the educational context. However, TYA can really mean just about anything so long as it somehow relates to theatre and school aged kids. One of the problems with this is that time for audience discussion after the performances is not always planned for. TYA is usually thought of as a play being brought into a school and performed for large groups of students by professional actors. The hope is then that students gain an appreciation for this art form, while simultaneously learning simply by watching the plays. Though admitting the value of being exposed to theatre at young

ages, TYA as an educational tool could use some tweaking. Perhaps because there is a possibility that each person might learn something different from the same play and that there is an unspoken expectation that theatre when performed for children generally has a single lesson that needs to be learned or accepted by its audience, using a theatre performance solely as a tool for educating is not always a good idea.

Theatre as Product

I once worked for a girl's summer theatre camp in the U.S.A as their Theatre Director. I was responsible for 8 theatre staff, 8 dance teachers and 5 music specialists who put on 4 musicals with 125 girls aged 7-15. A significant number of the campers had worked on Broadway, or acted in television commercials. Auditions took place, parts were cast and acting, music and dance rehearsals held. Then, after three weeks, performances were put on.

This example shows how a theatre production whether at a school, camp or in a private program can solely focus on the performance or 'product'. The competitive attitude that sometimes exists in this type of environment leads to a fervor and frantic 'dash to the finish line' that has as its final 'prize' the approval of the audience. Since in this instance, the campers and their parents spent a lot of money on this experience, there was added pressure on counselors and staff who had to ensure that lines were learnt, songs perfected, sets painted and lighting and staging sequences rehearsed.

This idea that if the final product is good, the experience is successful and should be continued and funded in the future is, in my opinion, one of the core problems holding back the development of drama and theatre in education programs. Society nowadays seems to value 'product' more than the 'processes'.

Emergent Themes

In my own preliminary research on drama, the theatre, art and education, I found a significant number of recurring themes. Emotion and imagination came up so often that I chose to describe and discuss them.

Imagination

In *Stupidity and Tears* by Herbert Kohl (2004), there are a number of important observations about teaching and learning in the educational world that are related to imagination. He concentrates on the imagination as a powerful tool in the classroom, because he sees the imagination as something that is redeeming and nurturing, that can reach beyond the forbidden and the unspoken allowing people to play with possible truths and transcend everyday reality so that they can begin to define and understand their own values and themselves (p.90-94).

For Kohl, the study and promotion of the imagination and its creative expression is an essential tool in the classroom. He has worked with students who have survived refugee camps, poverty and abuse by hiding inside their imaginations and expressing their feelings through artistic play. Kohl issues a plea for the creative, compassionate and social imagination because he believes that:

we cannot afford to allow people to become so small that they can dream only a world of violence, greed and joyless competition. Teachers and parents and all the rest of us need to be as imaginative as our children, to nurture their imaginations as well as our own, and to keep on, no matter the circumstances, dreaming and acting for a more decent, compassionate, and equitable world. In

hard times, this is one of the finest gifts we can provide for our children, for other people's children, and for ourselves (p. 98-9).

Imagination and Education

Since imagination must be at the heart of the collective human consciousness, as believed by Kohl, I now turn to education and art as described by A.S Neill (1921) in his text: *Summerhill, A Radical Approach to Child Rearing*. In his sections on theatre, dance and music, Neill declares that pupils who participate in these activities must not follow any specific guidelines. Instead of telling the children to perform specific plays or well-known stories, he allows them the opportunity to play instead of giving plays and to improvise parts of their favorite stories or to engage in role-play. This he calls "spontaneous acting" (Neill, 1921, p.70).

One gathers from these examples the value of imagination to each individual's expression and overall development. In education, it is best not to restrict the child's expression of the imagination. It must also be noted, aspects of the imagination and fantasy that are dark and destructive must not be promoted or encouraged. Drama as a framework requires its participants to project themselves through a character developed in their imagination into a situation that consists of structured action, occurs in the moment, and demands intellectual, physical and emotional attention. This allows one to find some sort of new perspective into the ways in which people think, feel and interact with one another.

I once volunteered with an after-school drama class for elementary students, in which the need to discontinue the dramatic play emerged: three students were instructed to sit in a chair on a stage for one minute; I had used this activity many times in the past

and it was helpful to observe the students' abilities to concentrate on an activity and simply be, instead of doing. The one child spent only a few seconds in the chair before jumping up out of it and attempting to entertain the rest with silly faces and noises. When I reminded him that the instructions were just to sit in the chair he returned but, a few seconds later, he began to pretend to kiss someone sitting next to him in a highly sexual manner. As I hesitated, he jumped up and began to grunt and groan and mimic intercourse. Afterwards, he began to beat the imaginary object of his attentions and worked himself into frenzy. When, I calmly asked him if he thought the minute was up, he said yes and sat down as though this display was a common one.

The second student who got up to sit in the chair did not stay seated for long either. Within seconds, he had thrown the chair to the floor, at which time I asked him to return to the activity. After a second attempt, this student began running around the stage as though he were a passenger in a car trying to get the attention of the driver. This continued until the student was almost in tears because the driver was not paying attention to him. I asked him to stop and tell me what he wanted to say and he told me that he just wanted his mother to listen to him, instead of ignoring him and talking on her cell phone. We finished with a group activity and I left with very unsettled thoughts.

It was after this experience that I re-read Augusto Boal's ideas on metaxis, or interplay between the actual and the fictitious, and discovered that the main point of metaxis is a kind of mental liberation using the imagination and acting to release painful memories. R.K. Elliot speaks of imaginative acts as a means of freeing ourselves from our circumscribed view of the world in Gavin Bolton (1992) where:

Imagination breaks the domination of our ordinary habits of conception and perception- including aesthetic perception-which seems to bind us absolutely to the given world of all kinds of imaginative behaviors. However, drama is the only one that articulates inventing, anticipating, recollecting, hypothesizing, creating, musing and day-dreaming or any other mode of imagining through the medium of concrete action. Thus breaking ordinary habits of ‘conception and perception’ is achieved in a unique way through the particularity of an occurring event (p. 141).

I observed in the dramatic play of the students the need to express their inner emotions about a troubling event in their personal lives. In this imaginative re-working of experiences, these students used drama as a means of self- liberation. If I had had more training at the time, I may have found a way to help them confront and name the issues that haunted them instead of simply allowing them to emotionally express themselves.

Emotion

“It is often pedagogically useful to say, ‘Pretend that you are...’ Emotions swing into action, and in many cases we can attain a three-stage process: imagination-positive feeling-learning” (Naess, 2001, p. 72).

This quote from Arne Naess’ *life’s philosophy: reason and feeling in a deeper world* (2001), shows the importance of feelings as a catapult for imagining, feeling and learning. He discusses in great detail the role of music and art as catalysts that release intense feelings which make lasting impressions and must be discussed as a natural part of our emotional lives (p.58). He goes so far as to say that if a person is not in some kind

of emotional state but is completely neutral to what is happening around them, that individual is stagnating as a person (p.81).

Shakespeare in *King Lear* also reminds us that we must “Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say” when confronted with moments in our lives that are of great significance. However, this ease of expression of feelings and emotions seen as essential to Naess and Shakespeare has not been emphasized in our schools recently.

Peter Abbs (2004) uses his own educational experiences in *Against the Flow* to describe this lack of emotional development in the schools: “Never once did my tireless and well-meaning teacher engage my feelings, the latent energies of my aesthetic and existential responses” (p. 9). It is shocking that students do not feel as though their feelings or questions are being addressed adequately. It is shocking that teachers are expected to put aside their own creativity and emotions in order to focus on the curriculum. If the goal of education and learning is to create “insignificant sleepwalkers drifting through the dark night of prescriptive education...where the schools that exist...have become no more than corporations run by managers for the collective standardization of life” (Abbs, 2004, p.27) then engaging emotions and feelings is not the business of schools and those who work in them. If, however, we are to promote the growth of the individual and the growth of a society where people care about one another, then the schools must find a new way to engage the emotional life of its students and staff because emotions are the only part of people they own.

I do not believe that the goal of education is to produce automatons and so I believe we must question the trends of school boards and government for their role in the creation of standardized requirements within the schools. I will return to this idea at a

later time, when discussing how to provide a simple way to bring emotional learning into the classroom while at the same time attending to the required curriculum. The emergent purpose of this study based on the readings and necessities that the writers within this field have addressed, must be to find a way to place drama education and dialogue at the heart of the curriculum so that society will experience a re - awakening in the areas of emotional intelligence and imagination/creativity. One way that this can be done is to refocus education on the importance of engaging in meaningful dialogue between the various levels of society in order to ensure progress, understanding and equality.

Art and Narration Sickness

In this section I will discuss what I mean by monologue and dialogue. Augusto Boal in *Legislative Theatre* (1998) states that it is “when a person is speaking on their own in the theatre or anywhere else for that matter, we call it monologue” (p.24). This simple and brief definition describes what many teachers do in the classroom. The ‘normal’ expectation of students that is to stay quiet and listen is essentially the same as the expectation actors traditionally have of their audience.

Fortunately, many teachers have adopted the teaching practice of relying on monologue, or direct instruction, only as a last resort in their classes. Instead, project based learning, discussion groups, journal writing, community service work projects, opportunities for reflection and field trips to teach and encourage dialogue among students are gaining popularity. However, after:

- (a) careful analysis of the teacher-student relationship at any level, inside or outside the school, reveals its fundamentally narrative character. This relationship involves a narrating Subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the

students). The contents whether values or empirical dimensions of reality, tend in the process of being narrated to become lifeless and petrified. (Therefore we can see that) education is suffering from narration sickness...(where the teacher's role) is to "fill" the students with the contents of his narration...education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. (Freire, 1993, p.71)

The description of a teacher depositing information into his/her students is called the Banking Concept. This concept illustrates how when a teacher does not actively engage his/her students, the students become lifeless objects. This is why education is described as suffering from narration sickness. Instead of growing into thinking, feeling, active growing people, students are cut off from the sources (such as moving around, discussing and learning to express themselves) that they need to grow into mature human beings.

It is argued that this practice ultimately oppresses society as a whole because it is limiting the critical consciousness and agency of the student and simply preparing him/her for the role of meek and passive recipient who will simply maintain the social structures within which he/she lives. If, as I have previously argued, the classroom should be democratic in nature and allow for the student and teacher to socialize, develop a moral character, participate in critical inquiry and learn a base of common information, then the banking concept should be eliminated. This however, is hard and time-consuming work because it 'appears' easier for teachers and students to simply continue to do what they have always done.

The Solution: Dialogue and Liberation Education

Of utmost importance is the process of changing the way students and teachers see themselves and one another in relation to education and society. What this means is that since dehumanizing and oppressive treatment within the system has occurred in the name of helping and educating for an individual's growth and betterment, liberation and solidarity must be achieved jointly between teacher and student through practices such as dialogue (Freire, 1970).

In many ways, dialogue is harder to define and defend than monologue. Perhaps this is because it is "...about finding out, about discussing something openly until some new insight is discovered...it is about sharing points of view, assumptions, doubts, uncertainties, questions, fears, suggestions and wild ideas...and about exploring new possibilities and listening..." (Hilsabeck, 2001, p.26). Dialogue means opening up to another person, idea, group or way of living. It is not being afraid of losing your own peace of mind or of letting go of entrenched beliefs and ways of thinking. It requires risk and establishing equality and letting go of power. This is a difficult proposition for many educators. It is hard to admit that you don't know something to even one other person but when confronted with many different questions and ways of thinking it is sometimes easier to exert control over a situation and impose silence. I think what I like about the multiplicity of dialogue is that it is messy. It is like going out into the woods and exploring. You never know where the path will lead and you have to accept on some levels that you may get lost or fall along the way and get your pants all muddy.

In this sense, I agree with Freire who says that "love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself" (Freire, 1993, p.89) because if you do not

have a fundamental love for yourself and for all those with whom you are engaged in dialogue there cannot be any movement towards understanding and respect. Being humble enough to listen and admit you are wrong can be very hard, yet it offers the possibility for personal and societal growth.

Summary

The distinctions between theatre and drama in education have been examined. In the schools, theatre as a performance or product oriented pursuit and drama as a process - driven personal exploration is the common way to reference each. In relation to this query, using drama within a classroom and through the curriculum as a way to promote dialogue and interpersonal interactions between teachers and students has been seen as a valuable way for establishing democratic learning and dialogue. The art and education discussion sees as significant the injection of emotion and imagination into the heart of all learning as these human capabilities have been lost somewhere between pedagogically sound teaching practices and efficiency models for cramming information into the minds of students.

In order to re - imbue people, programs, schools and communities with some of these discarded joyful parts of living a life that is fully human and in solidarity with others, placing dramatic learning at the heart of all curriculum and naming it a critical pedagogy is necessary. Therefore, an exploration that I think could become a practical way to do just this will be undertaken next using the democratic form of drama and theatre that already exists. I believe that the Forum Theatre concept, with some modifications, has the potential to help students in their learning process and can lead to personal transformative development.

CHAPTER FOUR: AUGUSTO BOAL AND THE THEATRE OF THE

OPPRESSED

Before we can make dramatic activities a part of the educational mandate we must look at the evolution and development of Augusto Boal's theories. This will be done in order to see if the Forum Theatre (FT) and Theatre of the Oppressed (TOTO) can be used to practice democratic learning through hands on experiences in schools.

Paulo Freire and The Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Augusto Boal's theories stem from fellow Brazilian Paulo Freire's work described in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Freire writes about his work with adult literacy programs where he employs education to bring about social change. His pedagogy is based on the dialogue between educator and student. Freire believes that the student's personal social reality and history is the key to knowledge acquisition. Students must go through this conscientisação or process of self-awareness as part of their education on both a personal and a social level. In Brazil this personal and social process made sense because many of the basic needs, like food and shelter, were not met for most people.

This particular focus of personal and social self-awareness for development and change is an important proposition for all schools since they, as part of the public domain, are influenced directly by what is or is not going on within their society. This preoccupation with social change through education for the liberation of oppressed masses is at the core of Boal's work.

Brecht

Bertolt Brecht, the German born playwright and theorist, is the complementary reference necessary to grasp Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed. Commonly referred to as Epic or Marxist Poetics, Brecht contends that the traditional approach to theatre based on Aristotle's *Poetics* lulls the public into complacency by using theatre as a vehicle to inhibit critical thought and action, instead of encouraging analysis of what is presented on stage. Boal writes extensively about this problem and develops his own critique of the *Poetics* in his first book.

Traditional and Epic Theatre: New Directions

The main difference between traditional theatre and Brecht's Epic Theatre had to do with the way that the audience was involved in the event and the way that his plays were written, acted and produced. Epic Theatre aimed at developing awareness in its audience and bringing them to action through dialogue. Brecht's goal was for everybody to be actively and socially engaged in society in order to be validated as human beings. It also reinforces the argument that we cannot interact in a classroom if we are not actively involved in our own meaning - making. In the translation of Brecht's work by John Willet in *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic* (1964), the essential point of the Epic Theatre is described as focusing less on the spectator's feelings than their ability to reason. Instead of having a theatrical experience, one must come to grips with the ideas presented on stage. This critical engagement has also been described as a necessary condition for living in a democracy. The hope is that when actors present the different parts of an argument, an arousal and development of our critical nature will occur. This illustrates how the idea of art as a catalyst for future action can be linked to how enacting dramatic situations can lead to learning.

Another technique developed by Brecht that influenced the Theatre of the Oppressed is the alienation or A- effect. The aim of this A-effect is to heighten the spectator's attitude of inquiry and criticism toward some of the events on stage and to reduce the emotional response (Willet, 1964, p.136). These ideas, aimed at actively involving the audience, went on to influence some of the principles discussed in The Theatre of the Oppressed. Brecht also says that diminishing emotional reaction to a play does not mean that the audience should be devoid of emotion. Emotion is an essential human characteristic.

Boal and The Theatre of the Oppressed

Augusto Boal is the Brazilian - born educator, theatre worker and activist "...involved in challenging the horrendous conditions (he) found in the cities and countryside of Brazil - a struggle that was historically linked to the emancipatory efforts of many educators and political activists (including Paulo Freire) in other countries across Latin America" starting in the 1960's (Boltodano, Darder & Torres, 2004, p.6). His *Theatre of the Oppressed* was published in 1971 after he had developed an approach that evolved out of his own experiences.

In *The Rainbow of Desire* (1999), Boal writes that his original plays were idealistic ones that informed the peasants he was working with about the need for social revolution. When one of the workers took the message literally, arming himself and inviting Boal and his troupe to join him, he realized he could no longer advocate actions that he would not actually carry out himself. Instead, he decided to create a theatre where the spectators could get together and talk about their own beliefs, ideas and ways of doing things.

In this way, Boal used theatre as a way to empower those around him so that they “...(could) help to build (the) future, rather than just waiting for it” (Boal, 1995, p.xxxi). “By doing so, he unexpectedly discovered an effective pedagogical form of praxis that evolved directly from the audience’s participation, collective reflection, and the action generated by the participants” (Boltodano, Darder & Torres, 2004, p.7). This ultimately led him to develop his idea of the ‘spect-actor’ or the audience member who takes action (Cohen-Cruz & Schutzman, 1994, p. 238).

During the development of TOTO, Boal’s work came to an abrupt end when a military coup came to power and arrested, tortured and eventually forced him into exile. However in Argentina and, later Paris, Boal continued to develop his ideas and created the Legislative Theatre (1998) in an attempt to use theatre within a political system to create a truer form of democracy. This was a part of his response as a politician on Rio de Janeiro’s City Council after he returned home (Boltodano, Darder & Torres, 2004, p.7).

The Forum Theater (FT)

The Forum Theater, one of the most popular TOTO styles, evolved from an early Boalian technique called *simultaneous dramaturgy*, where spectators suggest changes that are then performed by the actors in order to solve a problem on the stage. Described in *The Theatre of the Oppressed* as the third degree of the third stage of Boal’s plan for transforming the spectator into an actor, this final step invites its participants to:

...intervene decisively in the dramatic action and change it. The procedure is as follows: First, the participants are asked to tell a story containing a political or social problem of difficult solution. Then a ten-or fifteen-minute skit portraying that problem and the solution intended for discussion is improvised or rehearsed,

and subsequently presented. When the skit is over, the participants are asked if they agree with the solution presented. At least some will say no. At this point it is explained that the scene will be performed once more, exactly as it was the first time. But now any participant in the audience has the right to replace any actor and lead the action in the direction that seems to him most appropriate. The displaced actor steps aside, but, remains ready to resume action the moment the participant considers his own intervention to be terminated. The other actors have to face the newly created situation, responding instantly to all the possibilities that it may present. Anyone may propose a solution, but it must be done on stage, working, acting, doing things, and not from the comfort of his seat. Often a person is very revolutionary when in a public forum he envisages and advocates revolutionary and heroic acts; on the other hand, he often realizes that things are not so easy when he himself has to practice what he suggests (p.139).

In this description, Boal calls the original play that is usually scripted on site with the help of the participants the “anti-model” since it depicts an oppressive situation where the protagonist must confront powerful opposition. This model holds a great deal of potential for adaptation. For example, in the classroom, instead of young students dealing with say, a tyrannical husband not allowing his wife to visit friends, they might ask for a scenario depicting a bully who steals a younger child’s lunch. In this way, practical solutions related to their lives can be found with their own suggested topic, can take place with the support and suggestions of other students.

Since no final conclusion is ever reached in the FT, the process of working through and aiming at achieving a good debate rather than finding a perfect solution

encourages participants to continually ask themselves “what could happen”? This also allows them to experience some real possibilities through dialogue and experience with others. Yet, how can a teacher in a classroom where some are shy and others are bored create the necessary environment for this work and simultaneously manage this type of proposition? Instruction and encouragement for students to become spect-actors instead of spectators in their own classroom learning is crucial for bringing this technique into the schools.

The Spect-actor

In order for the democratic potential of the Forum Theatre to be realized, Boal had to develop steps to assist in this process. People need to learn how actively to participate in this way. They cannot be expected to attend a play and immediately be able to cry “Stop” to the drama onstage and then jump up and try to act out their own solutions. If this is hard to do during a play, it must be even harder to do in daily life. As I have mentioned earlier, this sort of active participatory behavior is entirely voluntary, and it must be developed over time with the student at the centre of the process. The four stages that help an individual to develop into an active participant are:

First Stage: *Knowing the body:* a series of exercises by which one gets to know one’s body, its limitations and possibilities, its social distortions and possibilities of rehabilitation.

Second Stage: *Making the body expressive:* a series of games by which one begins to express one’s self through the body, abandoning other, more common and habitual forms of expression.

Third Stage: *The theatre as language:* one begins to practice theater as a language that is living and present, not as a finished product displaying images from the past:

First degree: *Simultaneous dramaturgy:* the spectators “write” simultaneously with the acting of the actors;

Second degree: *Image theatre:* the spectators intervene directly “speaking” through images made with the actors’ bodies;

Third degree: *Forum theatre:* the spectators intervene directly in the dramatic action and act.

Fourth stage: *The theatre as discourse:* simple forms in which the spectator-actor creates “spectacles” according to his need to discuss certain themes or rehearse certain actions (Boal, 1970, p.126).

Once these steps have been taken, the hope is that an individual should be able to participate not only in dramatic activities but in their own lives. Whether or not this can actually be done still remains a question.

Ethical Considerations

Concerns have been raised in response to this very question since making choices in a fictional situation costs very little while in actual life the price can be high.

Participants cannot be falsely taught that they can change circumstances beyond their reach (Haedicke & Nellhaus, 2001, p.17). This caution must be discussed throughout a Forum Theatre program especially where young people are involved. In a positive way, this means that a dialogue about the nature of action, collaboration and being engaged in positive change with others must be an ongoing part of this type of work.

The Joker

A necessary element in this process is the The Joker. The Joker is the animator in TOTO who speaks directly to the audience and actors during a performance and can stop and start/restart the action on stage at any time. The purpose is to clarify meaning, change the direction of action or raise important questions for consideration (Boal, 2004,p.3). At all times the Joker must transmit energy, excitement and enthusiasm for tackling problems while still showing genuine interest in the ideas offered from the audience. It is the spect-actor and The Joker that allow for the potential communication between audience and actors. The Joker is of importance for the continuous flow of the FT because it is only through such a character such that the TOTO can continue when there is a lag in the action or when more information is needed. Thus, the Joker carries the overall responsibility of structuring and deepening the learning experience. In training sessions all over the world, Augusto Boal and his son continue to instruct members of the public involved in activism and social justice work to learn how to become Jokers.

The Poetics of Change

The Theatre of the Oppressed helped Boal to understand and transform theatre from traditional performance to a sort of dialogue between audience and cast. Some would argue that this is not really new, because, despite the fact that in a typical show the audience does not speak they do participate when they clap, laugh, cry and listen. While I will agree that this is true, it is not the focus that I wish to consider at this time. Rather, because Forum Theatre is a reflection of reality and a rehearsal for future action, I am interested in considering whether or not a Forum Classroom where students and teachers

can try out and develop their ideas in a democratic way, can be used to prepare them for future political, social and community action.

Boal and Aesthetics

Also of note, is the most recent addition to Augusto Boal's vast arsenal of theatre work and theory, namely, *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed* (2006). This work has been undertaken by Boal in order to help all individuals discover themselves through the artistic process. He believes that this process is about the constant pursuit, expression and development of Love itself. As such, engagement with the aesthetic process has the power to expand one's perceptive and expressive powers while encouraging one to dream of or embark on future endeavors and eventually comprehend the world and society in their truest forms. The term "aesthetic neuron thought" is coined in this book. This scientific metaphor is used to show how the more an individual experiences and practices artistic pursuits, the greater is the capacity to understand emotional, imaginative and creative ways of knowing. This addition is linked to *The Theatre of the Oppressed* and all of Boal's works to date. It is interconnected in that all of the elements are harmonious and build upon one another. Significantly, the image of a tree is used to represent these various parts: trees and people both need water, food and strong roots to survive and grow. Artistic, aesthetic, theatre and drama programs too require care and pruning to produce fruits.

Performing Democracy around the world

Grassroots and urban-community based performing companies are basing their work on democratic principles in order to politicize a variety of issues and mobilize people around the world. TIE and the FT are also joining together to continually enhance the cognitive and affective experiences of their audiences. Efforts first made in 1982 by the Greenwich Young People's Theatre (GYPT) to adapt FT to their own TIE based usage will be explained briefly. This will be done in order to understand their primary educational concern for theoretically reuniting the feelings, thoughts and actions, *or praxis*, of their audiences in direct opposition to the practices in theatre and education that tend to keep them separate (Vine, 1993, p.110).

The GYPT sent three members of its company to an FT training session overseas. Here, a scenario depicting a wage - based conflict was presented and various solutions were acted out in response to the pupils' ideas. Emotions surfaced when dilemmas arose and discrepancies between the intentions of participants and their actions became apparent. This contradictory behavior was discussed. At the end of the day when a choice between personal advancement and work place equity was ultimately brought forward by the actors, the spect-actors were encouraged to step into the shoes of the central character to test out their ideas. The ultimate impressive results were as follows:

Hardly ever did the pupils consciously perform. They wrestled with the problems as they arose, sometimes were devious, sometimes became very angry, often ended up doing the opposite of what they intended-or sometimes very different-but seldom gave up. Sometimes they worked alone and sometimes they drew other pupils into the drama to represent their friends or workmates. The audience was spellbound. Not only were the pupils watching a performance but they were

weighting the chances of their own proposals against the results of the other, different proposals being tested in front of them...Between the interventions the pupils were asked to give their analysis of what had happened. As a group they became the sounding board for objective reflections on the continuing action. Often a pupil would say such and such...the problem is solved, and the others would say, No it isn't...now this will happen (Vine, 1993, p.114).

Once the GYPT members returned home and they reevaluated some of the practices that they had originally and consequently mistakenly attributed to techniques of the FT. From this point on, it became easier for this company to use aspects of Forum work and adapt it to specific situations and groups. In this way, although some of the techniques of the FT and TIE were being used by GYPT, they still stuck to a personal approach to their work that allowed for flexibility in technique depending on the situation and audience that they were working with-in. The divergent anti-self-perpetuation approach is perhaps closest to Boal's original intentions and practice. In a sense this particular group's personal level of autonomy has allowed them the freedom to present their own artistic statements without influence from external places.

This is perhaps an argument for the continual anti-structure of Canadian drama and theatre programs. For as schools, the cultural make up of Canada and artistic forms change, the principles that work for a particular class in a particular school at a particular time may never work quite the same way twice. Thus, in order to continually move forward, provisions for the developing and changing nature of the people and situations involved when making art, must be factored into the development of programs (in the way that GYPT appears to have been able to do). Other examples of theatre used as a

democratic performance in the contemporary context include *Madang Kut* of South Korea and Seattle Public Theatre's forum theatre work with homeless youth.

Summary

Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, influenced by Brecht and Freire has been presented in order to consider if this democratically based Forum Theatre concept can be used in the education of children and youth as a way to realize that the process of liberation begins with their critical response to their own experience. The FT requires that both its actors and 'audience members' undergo a period of preparation in order to participate fully in this tradition. Included in this process are the elements of: knowing one's own body and its limitations and possibilities; making the body expressive by playing games that allow one to abandon habitual behavior; discovering the process of theatre in the present so that one can learn how to actively participate and intervene in dramatic action and then eventually transfer this ability to act and intervene in a democratic way in one's own life and through engagement with the world.

Conclusions: Are Drama and Theatre Experiential Tools that can be used for developing and learning how to live democratically?

Forum Theatre work and programs put together by theatre companies such as GYPT show how theatre is being used as democratic participation throughout the world. One can conclude that theatre and drama are indeed tools that can be used to learn and participate in democracy. Additionally, the spectator transformation process described in the FT that gives individuals the opportunity to practice the behaviors that are required for democratic living and for future social and political action is an example of using theatre to learn about democracy. It is for these reasons, that the Forum Theatre can be

considered an experiential learning activity and its potential as a tool for learning, is significant.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONNECTING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING,
DRAMA AND THEATRE AS EDUCATIONAL TOOLS TO
LEARNING IN THE DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOM &
CONCLUSIONS

Review

Throughout this piece there are a series of interrelated themes. The development of virtues or particular qualities by the members of a democratic society through the rehearsal of carefully selected activities that foster their growth is one. The next theme is based upon an on-going debate over which classroom pedagogies best enhance student learning. While some theorists have concentrated on cognitive and perceptual differences, others have studied personality and psychological types. Within each approach to learning there are also numerous theories and models to describe the particular approaches. This has been the case within the experiential learning discussion. Although models such as the one developed by Kolb have historically been referred to most frequently, there is no definitive way in which every individual in the world optimally learns.

However, personal transformation can be seen as a desired goal for a life of learning. This transformation that is a result of embodied knowing- or the development of the body, mind and spirit- includes being involved in learning through experience and reflection with the world and others. Facilitating and enabling students to develop the personal skills to learn for themselves once a period of formal education is over, is thus a goal for educators and learners. Formal education for the purposes of learning and teaching generally occurs in a classroom where the school system of a particular country

mirrors the demands of its society. This means that society has an influence on the particular aims of education. In Canada, the development of a democratic citizenry through the education of the countries youth is one such educative aim.

The question then becomes, how best can democratic learning principles be integrated into the experiential classroom in order to positively affect personal and societal transformation? This leads to the promise of art or aesthetic education as a way to recognize and construct knowledge since “the arts are a natural part of a young person’s life and are connected to it through home, school and community-based experiences and activities” (Temmerman, 2006, p.273). Eisner (2004) has also described how the forms of thinking that the arts evoke can be used to reframe the conception of what education might try to accomplish. Such forms of thinking have their roots in the artistic forms of intelligence and include learning how to construct imaginative responses to problems or cope with uncertainty.

Making the Connections.

In order to connect the ideas of democratic and experiential learning with the use of drama and theatre techniques, I will now make the following comparisons and connections in order to ultimately draw conclusions based on the research presented in this paper.

1. Democratic and experiential learning
2. Experiential Learning and the tools of drama and theatre
3. Drama and theatre as tools for democratic learning

4. How are drama and theatre experiential tools that can be used within the classroom to prepare students for democratic life (where tolerance and dialogue are practiced for the benefit of society?)
5. Can experiential learning, drama and theatre lead to personal and societal transformation?
6. How can TIE and FT models be continually used and adapted for educational purposes?
7. Areas for future research
8. Conclusions

1. *Democratic and experiential learning*

Democratic and experiential learning are inextricably tied together since a democratic society, where members equally express how their lives and society are run, cannot exist without individuals participating. Experiential learning includes: a period of meaningful engagement with the environment, bringing previous knowledge to new situations and democratically facilitating learning. This is the case since experiences are events that are participated in and experiential learning for the purposes of socialization into societal norms takes into account the need to learn how to work with others. What is not implied is that experiential learning must deal with one individual dialoguing with another in a reflective and caring way. This is perhaps why Aristotle suggested that we must strive to develop particular qualities that are beneficial for not only ourselves but for society too. Active engagement with one's society while working to develop one's highest potential (for the good of all) provides a climate where learning and harmony can occur.

Social behaviors mentioned by Sharp (1991) demonstrate democratic learning: they include actions such as listening to one another, submitting the views of others to critical inquiry and taking other ideas seriously by encouraging and responding to them (p.297). Since these actions require interacting with other people in a respectful and caring manner, the capacity to experience and engage through democratic dialogue shows how democratic and experiential learning are connected.

2. Experiential learning and the tools of drama and theatre

Art is experience. Art demands attention, engagement, consideration, dialogue, participation and reflection. So does experiential learning. However, when the field of experiential learning itself allows for a diversity of possible environments and definitions, the space for drama and theatre activities that involve the body, mind, voice, imagination and emotions can, without any stretch of the imagination, be added to the already unlimited arsenal of experiential learning possibilities that legitimately contribute to learning.

3. Drama and Theatre as tools for democratic learning

Since experiential and democratic learning complement one another and since theatre and drama are experiences therefore drama and theatre must be included as a part of democratic learning. Dialogue, listening, critical thought and consideration for social and personal improvement are all involved in democratic learning as well as to theatre and drama programs. In this way, their effective use in schools holds the potential for helping students and teachers to learn together in any safe environment. This means challenging the status quo and convention while simultaneously passing on traditions through dialogue and activities such as role - play. Through dialogue, participants of democratic

learning use theatre and drama tools to achieve a critical perception of the world where one can challenge privilege. This type of work also requires the planning and expertise of a reflective facilitator or teacher who can direct the dramatic interventions and techniques necessary in a democratic learning environment.

4. How are drama and theatre experiential tools that can be used within the classroom to prepare students for democratic life (where tolerance and dialogue are practiced for the benefit of society?)

“Drama has to be about something. This, of course, is a truism; but it can be about most things...therefore, what must be remembered when choosing the focus is to ask whether the topic can be interpreted in human terms” (Warren, 1995, p.11). The potential to use drama and theatre to prepare students for democratic participation, social justice, tolerance, dialogue and any other beneficial, relevant and engaging topic is unlimited. No matter what is going on in a classroom or learning environment, drama and theatre can be used to engage students in activities that range from personal development to conflict resolution. As discussed in Chapter 4, the use of Drama as Process also has the potential to be used as a significant tool for democratic learning, so long as it is used along with other pedagogically sound practices. Drama for Change described by Assunta Kent is:

characterized (by) an attempt to move participants to reflect upon past and present economic, political, and social relations; to re-imagine societies currently divided...and to act upon resulting insights, both collectively and as individuals, during the drama as well as in their everyday lives (Kent, 1994, p.37).

By providing opportunities to use drama as a way to participate, imagine and creatively act out their own ideas for societal change through drama, as Kent suggests,

students are not only developing skills for living in a democracy, they are challenging themselves and their own personal attitudes. There is no easier or cheaper way to enable an entire group of people to learn about one another than through drama!

5. Can experiential learning, drama and theatre lead to personal and societal transformation?

In a word, yes. Through even the simplest of games such as the Clap Game: participants stand side by side in a circle with feet planted hip distance apart and then have to ‘pass the clap’ by pivoting to their left or right as a single clap that is passed around the entire circle by the previous person takes place. The catch? You must clap at the exact same time as the person who is ‘passing the clap’. This means that there are two sets of hands being clapped at the same time while eye contact is maintained with the person you are clapping with. While it may appear as though the exercise is insignificant and simple, the overall purpose of passing the clap as quickly as possible around the circle becomes difficult when one person is not paying attention. What happens in this instance is usually the individuals are not ready to clap when it is their turn. So, instead of maintaining the rhythm of the game, a ‘hiccup’ or mistake occurs. The result and ultimate goal of these tiny disruptions to the overall action is to see how quickly the entire group can move on from the problem while not placing blame on any one person for the situation. After the game is played, the participants are asked to discuss ‘how it went with one another’. The stipulations for this part of the session are simply that remarks must reflect ones own personal place in the circle and the way that they or the group as a whole performed or could have done something differently to find future

success. Comments that single out and blame a particular individual for the success or failure of the undertaking are not permitted.

Over time, this group activity results in people taking personal responsibility for the outcome of the event. It also requires the actors to work together. Perhaps not apparent at the time of the exercise is the way that this activity develops awareness of space, time, self and the abilities of others. Working towards a common goal while using past experiences and learning to affect change and improvement for future endeavors is also inherent. In this way, a single activity transforms and changes a bunch of out-of-sync people into a cohesive and harmonious unit working towards a single common purpose in which the individual seeks to improve personally for the benefit of all.

As only one example of a drama warm-up, the clap-game prepares the actors to work with others, reflecting on personal experience and dialoguing about a common activity where negativity is seen as destructive while taking personal responsibility for one's actions for the well - being of others can lead to change. Other activities, games and dramatic tools which focus on connecting people and developing personal discipline ensure that drama and theatre tools incorporated in any program are a way to add a new dimension to learning.

6. How can TIE and FT models be continually used and adapted for educational purposes?

The question of how TIE and the FT can be used and adapted for education is the most exciting one because it hints at the possibility for growth, development and change in the area of drama and theatre education in the schools. What is learned in school can change society. I hope that theatre in education develops into a compulsory country -

wide program that reaches out to communities and other social institutions. In this way, theatre as a social community - based enterprise will provide people with a place to explore social, political and essentially human issues (e.g., the environment). This seemingly simple idea of course involves an enormous number of factors: policy provisions, value structures, language barriers and social constructions such as class and accessibility. Society needs to be reformed and restructured so that we can change the polyarchy that has disguised itself as democracy for so long.

Australia has in recent years developed a program where art and art education for the promotion of community identity and learning can be explored. This of course can only be done when people see and value the arts as essential for life.

The easiest way to share and provide individuals with the knowledge to make an informed decision as to whether or not the arts are indeed transformational, educative and essential is to expose them to the arts and let them participate. This is where the Forum Theatre and the spect-actor transformation techniques of Augusto Boal can be used within the schools. If high school programs suggest that every child can learn algebra, in grade 9, then surely they can learn about democracy, dialogue, tolerance, justice and community living through direct experience presented in the form of a drama or theatre program.

We must not be afraid to hold one another accountable for preparing our future world- not upon the principles of the economy, the latest trends or the newest technological advancements - but upon our ability to care, to express emotion and to feel for others.

7. Areas for Future Research

Drama and especially the spect-actor transformation could revolutionize democratic learning throughout Canada. With this in mind, how can we design a program/curriculum for this work to occur?

The development of a new curriculum integrating principles for democratic learning with art and experiential learning will take time and money. This would not only involve curricular changes, but teacher education training and re-training. Though there is much work to be done, creating a program and working it out in a classroom will be an exciting prospect. I believe that research on developing a classroom environment where all voices are heard must be undertaken so that we can learn how to listen and speak with one another. Once the transformation from observer to active participant throughout Boal's four stages occurs, the idea is that a sense of self and community will be developed within each individual participant.

The work that Boal's techniques have inspired the world over, holds real potential for continued use and adaptation. Community based theatre programs which "perform" democracy and include marginalized people in the development of their productions are numerous. We must not let the power of drama and theatre go to waste or be forgotten from our collective consciousness. Instead we must continue to build upon the foundation that has been established.

8. Conclusions

Ultimately, it is my hope that classes in Canadian schools will use some of the techniques presented in the spirit of The Forum Theatre in order to tackle relevant social, political and personal issues. This can only occur in a classroom where everyone respects

the learning environment, each other and the democratic way of doing things. In this way practically living and experiencing what it means to be a participant within a community in preparation for future action and reflection needs to be experienced to be learnt. These dialoguing and interactive classrooms can deal with and approach issues in the same way a forum would.

Change is inevitable. No matter what one does or does not do in their lifetime, each person ages, experiences emotions, has thoughts and is capable of dreaming dreams. However, what does matter is the fact that we as human beings have the freedom to choose and strive to imagine the world as a better and more equitable, tolerant and loving place. Art, learning and believing that 'something other than what is' has the power to positively contribute to this happening. We just need to find a way to do this work together.

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