

SUMMARY: Intercultural Recognitions through Performative Inquiry

Performative inquiry is a research methodology and mode of learning which encourages intercultural recognitions through dramatic exploration. The authors revisit a role drama about Canadian aboriginal experience in residential schools to illustrate the possibilities of intercultural conversations and transformations realized through performative inquiry. Successful second language learning requires an embodied understanding by second language learners of the context, land, history, and political, social, economic, and cultural environments experienced by first language speakers. Performative inquiry provides a momentary entrance into “other” worlds through embodied play and reflection, thereby offering students opportunities for intercultural awareness, dialogue, and understanding.

Lynn Fels, Ph.D. (UBC) teaches and writes about performance, teacher education, and curriculum theory. A former humor columnist, performing arts educator, and corporate writer and researcher, Lynn is currently writer-in residence in the Centre for the Study of Curriculum & Instruction at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. I wish to gratefully acknowledge Beverley Machel, Matt Chenoweth, Yasushi Kadota, & Stephen Vachon who designed and led the role drama discussed in our chapter.

Lynne McGivern is a doctoral student in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia. Her areas of research include language policy, identity in second language learners, and critical language testing. Her current work follows a career in theatrical design. Lynne’s extensive experience in theatre coupled with her ESL teaching experience has resulted in her strong commitment to the potential of the arts in second language learning.

Third volume of the ABLEX series *Advances in Foreign and Second Language: Pedagogy, Body and Language, Intercultural Learning through Drama*.
Edited by Gerd Brauer, Emory University

Intercultural Recognitions through Performative Inquiry

Lynn Fels & Lynne McGivern

Fels, L. & McGivern, L. (2002). Intertextual Play through Performative Inquiry: Intercultural Recognitions. *Body and Language: Intercultural Learning Through Drama*. G. Brauer (ed.). Greenwood Academic Press.

*Singing the space
there are meetings
and I am transformed...*
–Barba (1995:165)

At the edge of dawn, child warriors, we stand, shoulder to shoulder. Our tribal chief walks the line that separates us, adorning tribal ribbons on our chests. “Wear these with pride, my sons, my daughters. This ribbon symbolizes your membership in our tribe. It speaks of the history of our people and of our courage. It speaks of our presence in harmony with the land. Be strong, be of good heart and care for each other.” He clasps our hands, and together we become one with the tribe. The ceremony ends and we slip away. Some dash off to splash in the stream, others pick blueberries, and some of us secret ourselves in the woods to spy on older siblings. The sun seeks a higher loft in the sky, and blesses us with the bright warmth of day.ⁱ

language learning through dramatic exploration as a meeting place of intercultural conversation and transformation

Successful second language learning requires an embodied understanding by the learner of the context, land, history, cultural, social, and political environments experienced by first language speakers. Language learning is a personal, communal, and political act that involves border-crossings – *strangers in a new land*. **Critical applied linguisticsⁱⁱ** recognizes the second language classroom as a site **of struggle** where social issues and cultural values play a significant role in the curriculum (**Norton, 1995; Toohey, 2000**). The tools and strategies we choose and the curriculum we present embody our own pedagogical positioning, values, and expectations both for our students and ourselves.

As the various authors of this book illustrate, drama can be a dynamic tool for teachers who seek to situate second language learning within a context and environment. Drama

transforms the four walls of a classroom into a variety of situations, environments, and relationships which require students to take on roles and context-specific language. Students navigate these dramatic situations in pairs or small groups, often with the rest of the class as audience. Sometimes they work with a written script; sometimes they improvise within the logic of the scene, and so learn the vocabulary and grammatical structures required within a given context of play. The objective of these drama activities in the second language classroom is to give students the opportunity, through simulation, to “rehearse” linguistic exchanges that they may encounter in “everyday life.”

Unfortunately, the dramatic situations usually proposed by second language instructors or textbooks involve one-dimensional situations with a prescribed dialogue and conclusion. Students, for example, are required to take on the roles of customers and waiters, store clerks and shoppers, doctors and patients in which dialogue and action are often restricted to the learning objectives of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Consequently, learning opportunities provided by such drama activities to explore beyond the given text or to engage in critical thinking or creative exploration are limited.

From a critical applied linguistics perspective, the scenarios typically chosen for drama-based second language learning promote the dominant culture, consciously or unconsciously reinforcing cultural behaviors, expectations, and relationships common to the culture of the language being taught. Absent from or silenced in these dramatic exchanges are the identities and experiences of second language students who are instructed to work within a prescribed text. Lost is an opportunity for a sharing of multiple perspectives, for engaging in intercultural dialogue, and, most importantly, for inviting a shifting of paradigms which signal an embodied understanding that opens new possible conversations.

*Not walls
of cement, but ...
the melodies
of our presenceⁱⁱⁱ*

Each of us and our students dwell within an embodied presence of language, gender, sexual and ethnic identity, cultural heritage and values, individual and communal experiences, ambitions, and perspectives. Our embodied presence speaks through our choices of action, the positions we take, the curriculum we create or to which we respond, and our relationships with others both within and outside the classroom.

The question that challenges us is how do we engage the embodied presence of individual students within our second language classrooms? In the opening up of curriculum to the presence of our students, what learning will be realized within the interplay between the multiple world(s) of experience and identities embodied within each individual? What concerns, fears, challenges, questions will students entertain as they (re)language their world? What issues will they choose (if given a choice) to explore? How will individual melodies resonate within the presence of others? With what experiences, memories, stories, will they gift us? How may we as teachers and learners engage in a meaningful dialogue which invites the sounding of all voices?

As Ann Axtmann investigates in her chapter on “Transcultural Performance in Classroom Learning,” the opportunities within the second language classroom for intercultural pedagogy are facilitated through creative exploration through the arts, or what we name *performative inquiry*. Drama activities such as improvisation, tableau, or writing in role open spaces for intercultural conversations that can transport students beyond the mechanics of conventional second language learning into an empowering world of political and communal recognitions that invite new spaces of intercultural dialogue and understanding.

Our ambition then is to engage our students in dramatic explorations that recognize the experiences, heritage, values, and stories embodied within individual students. Performative inquiry in the second language classroom provides an opportunity to open up a “third space” of presence and exploration, where intercultural interactions and possible negotiations and recognitions emerge.^{iv}

A third space or performative space is a creative interactive space within which participants negotiate multiple possibilities of action and, through shared participation and reflection, learn from each other both within and outside the drama. For example, in a role drama of the fabled Pied Piper, students in role as town councilors may reverse their decision not to pay the Pied Piper when faced by a delegation of shopkeepers decrying the financial impact of a town without children, or when confronted by the tears and threat of lawsuits by parents enraged by the loss of their children to the slighted piper’s tune. Within the performative space of the role drama, children learn that individual choices of action have repercussions, and that decisions need to be carefully considered and negotiated from multiple perspectives.

As educators, our challenge is to break free from Barba’s “walls of cement” that so often inform our curriculum, and to venture into the intertextural^v realm of social responsibility and intercultural learning that drama invites. By giving ourselves permission to release the expected and prescribed scripts of drama-based second language learning, we open curricular spaces of intercultural possibility for students within a pedagogical environment of dynamic interplay and recognition of the presence of “others.”

Language is inclusive of the language of experience, environment and relationship, context, spoken, written and danced language, cultural beliefs and values – an embodied text that speaks across time and experience (**Norton Pierce, 1995: Norton & Toohy, 2000: McGivern,**

2002). Each one of us is an embodied text, and as we engage in conversation and interaction, intercultural texts are written or spoken or played into shared memory and presence. Within the possible imaginary worlds of performative inquiry, the classroom becomes a site of questioning and re-imagining, a playing with language, choices of action, and possibility. The role drama on residential schools explored in this chapter is a powerful illustration of the possibilities of performative inquiry as an intercultural space of embodied exploration and learning.

Opportunities for intercultural learning through drama are as multiple as the cultural, social, economic, communal and personal experiences, perspectives and imaginations of the participants at play. To listen to the melodies of our presence as students engage in intercultural conversations of embodied play is to open the door to a stranger and enter into a transcognitive dance of recognition.

drama as a teaching tool and research site of intercultural responsibility and recognition.

I teach a course in drama-in-education every summer.^{vi} The classroom is my research site: through drama or what we call embodied play^{vii}, we create imaginary worlds and within those worlds, we learn about ourselves, our choices of action, our responsibilities to others. Today, a hot July morning, we set aside our coffee cups, and gather into our circle as shafts of sunlight fall through the high windows of the classroom. When the four students leading the day's role drama announce that for the next ninety minutes we are to be in role as First Nations people^{viii}, I become apprehensive.

Donning the roles of aboriginals is risky business: always, there is the danger of stereotyping; the risk of stepping on cultural racial sensitivities; a superficial pretending to be what we are not. Cultural sensitivity, authenticity, and respect plays against the precarious

benefit of exploring native issues through drama. The language and experience of the First Nations people is not my language nor experience. As a drama educator, I must judiciously balance the risks of cultural injury with the possibilities and opportunities of learning. My concerns are mirrored on the faces of the other participants, a multicultural grouping of teachers and student teachers who have enrolled in the course to investigate drama as a teaching tool cross-curriculum. *Should we enter into this?*

Leading the role drama are two First Nations students, a second-language learner from Japan, and a Canadian-born native speaker of English, who now wait patiently for our commitment. They have designed the drama, and are curious about the possible world(s) that will unfold, as we breathe life into the skeleton of their imagined text. They have questions that they want to investigate through drama, and they are placing trust in us to join their explorations. The imaginary world we are about to create will be one guided by them. I take a deep breath and trust that the “path we lay down in walking” (Varela, 1987: 63) will lead us to compassionate interstanding.^{ix}

performative inquiry as embodied intertextual learning

*performance is heartbreath
dancing possibility
and interstanding into presence*

Performative inquiry is a research methodology and mode of learning that invites students to explore imaginary worlds within which space-moments^x of interstanding and intercultural recognitions are possible. Performative inquiry explores creative actions and interactions realized through performance.^{xi} Performative inquiry recognizes performance as an action-site of learning^{xii}, thereby opening up opportunities for research and teaching investigations. Within the possible imaginary worlds of performative inquiry, the classroom

becomes a site of questioning and reimagining, a playing with language, choices of action, and possibility. Initiating the inquiry is a question, an issue, a fragment of story, an experience, or phenomenon that the teacher and students wish to investigate. Performative inquiry uses elements of role drama, including soundscapes, tableau, writing-in-role, and improvisation to initiate embodied intertextual conversations within an imaginary world(s) created by participants.

For example, a teacher may be interested in exploring the issue of bullying with his or her students. Rather than holding a class discussion, the teacher decides to investigate the issue through performative inquiry. She designs a role drama situated in a fictional community where bullying is a problem in the local school. The children, in role as school administrators, teachers, social workers, or concerned parents, are invited to a meeting to develop an action plan. What concerns will they raise? What solutions will they propose? After the role drama, students reflect on what they learned about bullying and the community's responsibilities and choices of action in situations where children are being bullied. Through their embodied play in role and in the reflection following the role drama, the teacher and her students may gain insight into the causes and effects of bullying and may be encouraged to actively address the problem of bullying in their own lives.

An essential component of performative inquiry is a collective sharing of experience and reflections among participants following the performative exploration: what happened, what choices of action were taken, what other actions or responses might have been possible, what insights or feelings or questions emerged, what might have been learned from the experience? This reflection may be in the form of group discussions, circle-sharing, journal writing, or replaying situations which emerged during the initial inquiry.

Performance boldly and precariously declares that Being is performed (and made temporarily visible) in that suspended in-between.

–Phelan, 1993:167

A theoretical understanding of performance^{xiii} as a mode of learning may be helpful in a conversation about drama as a teaching and research tool within a second language classroom. Performative inquiry is based on a theory of learning which recognizes that learning is realized through performance.^{xiv} Performative inquiry draws, in part, from enactivism (e.g. Varela et. al, 1993; Davis et. al., 1996) through which learning is a “laying down in walking” of “new possible worlds.” Knowledge is seen as not separate from the learner but embodied within creative action and interaction. “What we do,” Varela says, “is what we know, and ours is but one of many possible worlds. It is not a mirroring of the world, but the laying down of a world...” (Varela, 1987:62).

These new possible worlds may be created through the creative actions and interactions of students in role; it is within performance, exploration happens and possible space-moments of learning may emerge. For example, the students leading the residential school role drama wanted to explore the impact that residential schools have had on First Nations people: *How has the aboriginal residential school experience influenced individual and communal responses and choices of action?* Cognizant of the need to help their fellow students understand the impact that the loss of community and cultural heritage through forced assimilation might have had on First Nations people, these students chose a dramatic framework within which to set their inquiry. Their ambition was to create an imaginary world within which students in role as First Nations people could view aboriginal issues and experiences from a new perspective.^{xv} Through ritual,

visualization, improvisation, and symbolic artifacts, students in role were able to create and sustain an imaginary world that allowed investigation of First Nations issues from within.

Performative inquiry – the exploration of a topic or issue through performance– involves “...an ongoing bringing forth of a world...” (Maturana & Varela, 1992), created by participants who bring to their dramatic play embodied texts of knowledge based on their experiences, cultural heritage and relationships with others. The multiple perspectives brought into the imaginary world(s) of performance by individual students and the consequent interactions between create an embodied text of creative interplay and intertextual conversations that may be reflected upon at the conclusion of the role drama. For example, in the role drama on residential schools, choices of action taken within the role drama were later discussed during the debriefing session with the four role drama leaders and participants. Individual students spoke of the choices of action they had taken within the drama, and the impulses behind their action. Together they reflected on why they had responded the way they had during the role drama; wondered whether they might have acted the same way if they had found themselves within a similar situation in the “real world”; and shared individual insights and perspectives in relation to their own lives that participation in the role drama brought to light.

Possible space-moments of learning come into being through (re)playing the landscape of inquiry through creative action and interaction. Learning is possible through inhabiting and investigating imaginary world(s) that are momentarily played into being. By entering into the role drama, participants in role as First Nations people may encounter moments of interstanding which shift their understanding of the issues being explored. For example, a student may discover that a historical event in a history book written by a British publisher “plays” differently when, in role, he or she experiences the disempowerment of a parent whose child is taken by a

government official. These space-moments of learning or interstanding are what drama educators call Aha! moments.^{xvi} Aha! moments are moments of recognition or transcognition – space-moments of learning – that come into being in the interstices between the real world(s) and not yet real world(s) of performance.^{xvii}

A solitary moment within a role drama brings forth a new possible world and, within a space-moment of recognition, opens new horizons within which to wonder and wander.

Learning then is an ecological interaction: performance plays on “the edge of chaos” where patterns of interrelations and interconnections are created and recreated through an “endless dance of co-emergence” (Waldrop, 1992; 12). Learning becomes an embodied “laying down in walking” realized through the interplay between participants within co-evolving world(s)^{xviii}. What determines the footsteps that mark the co-emerging path(s) are the cultural, racial or ethnic, sexual, social, political, economic, communal and personal experiences and identities of individual participants. Intercultural recognitions, or what Ann Axtmann calls, “transculturalization” happens when students understand the world from a new perspective. Performative inquiry, then, is a research methodology and mode of learning that invites the co-evolving world(s) of performance, interpretation, complexity, and cognition into a transformative dance of possibility.

To entertain performative inquiry as a research vehicle and curricular place of learning is to recognize risk, the unexpected, that opens us to possibility and impossibility.^{xix} There is risk in imagining into being a space to explore the world(s) of First Nations people; there is risk in giving voice and presence to students; there is risk in trusting in the moment. And yet, it is within

the intertextual interplay realized through performance, that intercultural recognitions, empowerment, and interstanding become possible.

As a tool for exploration and interpretation, performative inquiry invites teachers and students to investigate their world(s) through creative and critical (re)imagining. By locating performance, or specifically, drama, within a learning theory and research methodology, we, as teachers and researchers, open spaces of curricular and linguistic exploration. On the edge of chaos, where our imaginary and embodied worlds co-emerge in a continuous intertextual dance, we locate ourselves within spaces of creative action and interaction, where unexpected possibilities of intercultural recognitions dance into being.

recognizing other within

I am braiding the hair of my youngest child. Her brother is playing outside with friends. My neighbor has come to visit, and we chat idly, as Grandmother sits in the corner, snoozing. A knock breaks our conversation. "Ah, another neighbor," I murmur, opening the door. But it is a stranger. He is dispassionate, official. "I have come for your son. Residential school. It is decreed by the Canadian government." Looking over his shoulder, I see my son coming towards us. At other houses, too, there are government officials knocking on doors. They have papers. They have come for our children. My son turns to run, but they have anticipated this. He is seized and taken away with the others. Our children. "No!" My cry of pain, despair, rises above us, startles us into silence. My son and I look at each other, no words but my hand reaching out to him...

Performative inquiry opens spaces of intertextual play within which social responsibility and individual and communal response may be investigated. When we take on a role, often we are said to be "in the shoes of" the one we are playing. Yet, to claim to be so entirely is impossible. A former First Nations residential school student and a Japanese male ESL student are worlds apart, and yet, through drama, it is possible for either to have a momentary recognition of the realities that shape each other's world(s). Although we bring unique perspectives, experience, and cultural understandings to individual situations, there are moments

when, like Alice in the Looking Glass, in role, we slip through an opening in the gap, and stand in-between worlds for a momentary glimpse of another place and another way of being. It is a moment when we stumble, when we gasp in recognition, when time stops, and we suddenly understand that there is another possible view from which to see our world, another possible action that we might pursue. This space-moment of learning is what Applebaum calls the stop.

*Between closing and beginning lives a gap, a caesura, a discontinuity.
The betweenness is a hinge that belongs to neither one nor the other.
It is neither poised nor unpoised, yet moves both ways ...
It is the stop.*

– Applebaum (1995: 15, 16)

I have read of the dislocation of First Nations children to residential schools and imagined how parents might have felt. However, it was not until the terrible scene in our role drama when the government official dragged away my child, that I truly connected with the pain of loss and disempowerment experienced multiple times within our nation's history. And, within a heartbreath, I had a momentary glimpse of the pain and consequences of such a moment. How could a mother lose her child and not forever be broken? How could a child, in the brutal stripping away of family relationships, culture, and language, not look back in anger and despair? During debriefing, the student in role as my son, spoke to his sudden recognition of his situation. *It wasn't until I heard your cry and saw your tears, that I began to question my own response and suddenly, I felt afraid and began to fight back.*

Drama requires a leap of trust in which students, playing in role, touch, however briefly, the emotional anguish of a parent losing her child and a child's desperate response. In that temporal moment, we embody the First Nations community's wounding, and (re)experience the scarring imposed by another culture. We cannot claim ownership to another individual's or cultural group's experience, but we can open ourselves to witness and honour their stories,

experiences, and memories through the momentary glimpse that is gifted us through drama. While not claiming to be “in the shoes of” the other, compassion for another’s experience becomes part of the conversation, an intercultural learning shared through dramatic (re)play.^{xx}

How do we read the silent conversations within and outside the dramatic world(s) of shared experience? The government official at the door is a stranger, and yet he and his actions are also my heritage and responsibility. I, a Caucasian female, in role as a First Nations mother, open the door to the Japanese male ESL student playing the role of a Canadian government official. What comes to light is an odd overlapping of roles, identities, histories, cultural stories, and experiences. Performative inquiry layers question upon question, seeking not answers, only possibilities within the betweenness of exploration. What intercultural relationships evolve in a single meeting that are in truth multiple meetings realized through time and space?

*it is in the meeting places between we become
Here and Now, something happens.*

In the second language classroom, students seek entry into new linguistic spaces located in the betweenness that is “a hinge that belongs to neither one nor the other.”^{xxi} In struggling to restabilize, an intercultural dance requires new footings, new ways of moving within an embodied language of discontinuity, unfamiliarity, the not-yet-known. Drama invites students to share these moments of uncertainty and dislocation, and to speak to the experience embodied within a disrupted imaginary world. The learning that happens within drama is then revisited within the context of our everyday lives.

Performative inquiry provides a momentary entrance into “other” worlds through embodied play and reflection, thereby offering students opportunities for intercultural awareness, dialogue, and understanding. Transported into an unexpected environment, the student must re-

examine the familiar against the unfamiliar, and through the resulting disequilibrium recover a new balance of meeting oneself within a new environment.

We are pushed into lines, facing the residential school principal who speaks in an unknown tongue. His tone of voice is unkind, disinterested. Suddenly the guard strides along the lines, where we stand shoulder to shoulder. He strips off our tribal ribbons. You will speak only English! You will speak only English! He shouts. He is now moving down my line. I pull the ribbon from my shirt and hide it in my pocket. I secret this small self that is my identity. I can taste the fear of discovery. The others are without their ribbons. Someone protests and is disciplined. We are angered and sullen in our loss. A priest speaks softly, pats a child's arm, says a gentle word, moving down the lines, taming the sorrow, the pain, the anger.

The student in role^{xxii} as the residential school principal speaks to us in Japanese, and while the body language and tone is clear, the words are not. The unfamiliarity of place and language is disorientating. Pulled from the familiar we are relocated within a space that forbids us to sound our presence, a space that denies our communal and cultural voice. Faced with the foreign language of the principal, we are able only to guess the meaning of his gestures, intonations, and facial expressions. The actions of the guard, however, are brutally eloquent, as are his blunt words, *Speak English! Speak English!*

The intent of assimilation is clearly expressed by the residential school principal's use of an unfamiliar language and by the removal of our tribal identities. The ritual assimilation repeats itself along each line of children standing rigid – *through lines of generations*. Power and denial silences resistance; those who dare to speak out are punished. In a game taught to us by a student in role as the priest, I and others deliberately break the rules, stealing cards, lying in the absence of a winning hand. Small acts of disobedience, resistance enters the community as a language of survival. The tribal ribbon, remains hidden in my breast pocket; clinging to the torn ribbon of my heritage, I refuse to embrace the new language imposed by the authorities.

Through their embodied intertextual play within the imaginary world of a residential school, the role drama leaders and students arrive at new locations of intercultural learning. During the debriefing following the role drama, personal stories, questions, and moments of learning are shared between students as they slip out of their roles as native children and become

again themselves. Loss of identity, stripping away of language, home, and family relationships find resonance in individual experiences and intercultural recognition. Many students speak of suddenly understanding the experience of the First Nations people from a new perspective.

While the individual stories of First Nations children who experienced residential schools are not ours, the shared experience of a residential school within the imaginary world created by our role drama is, and that experience opens us to new possible realms of personal and communal acceptance and **interstanding**.

“We will play a game,” announces the priest, holding a thick braid of rope in his hand. Behind him, stand the guard, and the government official. “This rope represents your future. We will pull from one end, and three representatives chosen among you will pull from the other. This game will decide the fate of your people. Choose three of your strongest.” We look at each other. Who will speak to this dangerous task? You. You. And you. The three brace their feet, faces set in determination, the rope gripped in their hands. We crowd around them. The priest, guard and government official seize the rope, and the tension pulls taut between the two groups. “Now!” But we have not chosen our warriors well, already they are weakening. We lean towards them, willing strength into their muscles. I suddenly remember my tribal ribbon, and pull it crumpled from my pocket. “Here!” I cry, reaching forward. To my amazement, others have already secured tribal ribbons on the bodies of our warriors. Like tattered flags, attached to arms, legs, backs, shoulders, they signal the defiant presence of our people, our heritage, our culture, as the warriors pull, pull against the weight of the church, the government, the teachings that are not ours. The moment turns, and triumphant we chant, “Pull! Pull! Pull!” with all the heart and courage of a people sounding voice.

The image of the three students in role as First Nations people, their bodies covered with the torn ribbons of masking tape, plays still within the shaft of light in our sunlit classroom. I sense again the shock and delight of discovering that others too, had secreted their tribal ribbons; that they too had defied the order of the guard. *I am not alone in my resistance.*

Now, in this moment, the courage, language, cultural heritage, and experience of our people is voiced by a symbolic honoring and remembering of tribal belonging as we cheer on each warrior pulling the rope. Through the tribal ribbons secreted and then restored, we find our voice, and sounding presence, realize renewed hope for our people. The moment, a symbolic tug-

of-war born within the imaginary world of drama, reaffirms cultural identity and membership, speaking simultaneously of past, present, and future. Slipping between the gap, we realize and recognize the possibility of rebirth of the First Nations people, both within role and without.

opening spaces for intercultural recognitions and new possible worlds of interstanding

The intercultural learning that happens when we open our curriculum to welcome the individual voices and experiences of our students through embodied play is breathtaking. More than successfully creating an appropriate linguistic situation where language happens within context, performative inquiry opens the possibility for space-moments of learning, intercultural connections, resonance, and recognitions. Our choices of action in role and our reflections following the residential role drama reveal the intercultural understanding realized and recognized within individual moments. Through embodied play, shared conversation, and journal writing, we came to new intercultural recognitions of the experiences of the First Nations people and our shared history that will influence future individual and communal choices of action and interaction.

In the co-evolving world(s) that is our classroom, we strive to create opportunities for our second language students to invite participation and to open new spaces of dialogue. Performative inquiry creates a context and performative space within which students are invited to imagine possible actions and interactions. *What if?*

In the residential school role drama, students were welcomed with the gift of tribal ribbons, signifying membership and opportunity for participation. They entered into a relationship of language, culture and experience, a relationship brutally rendered asunder by government officials removing the community's children to the residential school. *Speak English! Speak English!* Reclaiming a future within the dominant society required acts of resistance and the strength and pride realized through a symbolic and physical remembering and honoring of a shared heritage. *Pull! Pull! Pull!*

Hand over hand hauling in the netted light
–Phelan (1993: 177)

Performative inquiry is a research methodology which explores possible journey-landscapes, charting space-moments of learning realized through performance (Fels, 1998). The residential role drama created an imaginary world within which moments of interstanding were recognized: the agony of ruptured families, the stripping away of identity, the reclaiming of voice and culture. The role drama required that we, a class of teachers and student teachers from a variety of cultures, languages, and experience, step outside the so-called real world of the classroom to meet each other within the interstices through our shared experience within an imaginary world. *The betweenness is a hinge that belongs to neither one nor the other.* In the sharing circle, as the talking stick was passed from hand to hand, our individual experiences within role and in our own lives found voice. Exploration of relationships through drama transcends culture, time, and place to arrive on our doorstep. And on opening the door, momentarily, unexpectedly, we recognize the stranger who is us.

Resources

Applebaum, D. (1995). *The stop*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Barba, E. (1995). *The paper canoe: a guide to theatre anthropology*. (Trans. R. Fowler). London: Routledge.

Davis, B., Kieren, T., & Sumara, D. (1996). Cognition, co-emergence, curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 28, (2) 151-169.

Fels, L. (1998). In the Wind Clothes Dance on a Line. *jct: Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*. 14, (1) 27-36.

_____ & Meyer, K. (1997). On the Edge of Chaos: Co-evolving World(s) of Drama and Science. *Journal of Teacher Education*. 9, (1) 75-81.

_____ & Stothers, L. (1996). Academic Performance: Between Theory and Praxis. *Drama, culture, and education*. J. O'Toole & K. Donelan (eds.). Australia: IDEAS. 255-261.

_____. (1995). Cross-country with Grumet: erasing the line. *Educational Insights*. <http://www.lane.educ.ubc.ca/insights/home.htm>.

Lynch, B. (2000 March). "Rethinking Assessment from a Critical Perspective." paper presented at AAAL 2000, Invited Colloquium; Rethinking Assessment; Alternative Paradigms. Vancouver, British Columbia.

Maturana, H. & Varela, F. (1992). *Tree of knowledge: the biological roots of human understanding*. (revised ed.). Boston: Shambhala.

McGivern, L.(2002). Identity Under Assault: What Do I Do with the Dirt Under my Nails? Unpublished paper. University of British Columbia. Canada.

_____. (2001) **Appropriate Assessment for Young Language Learners: A Case for Social Responsibility to Critical Language Testing. Conference paper. RACE 2001. Tempe, Arizona. January 3-5, 2001.**

Norton Pierce, B. (1995) Social Identity, Investment, and Language Learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 1. Spring. 1995.

Norten, B. & Toohey, K. (2000). Identity and Language Learning. Kaplan R. (ed.). *Oxford University Handbook of Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford.

Pennycook, A. (1999). Introduction: Critical Approaches to TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*. 33 (3), 329-348.

Phelan, P. (1993). *Unmarked: the politics of performance*. London: Routledge.

Rutherford, J. (1990) The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha. J. Rutherford, (ed.) *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart. 207-221.

Tarlington, C. & Verriour, P. (1991). *Role Drama*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Taylor, M. & Saarinen, E. (1994). *Imagologies*. London: Routledge.

Toohy, K. (2000). *Learning English at school: identity, social relations & classroom practice*. Toronto: Multilingual Matters.

Varela, F. Thompson, E., & Rosch, E. (1993). *The embodied mind: cognitive science and human experience*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Varela, F. (1987). Laying Down a Path in Walking. W.I. Thompson, (ed.). *GAIA: a way of knowing – political implications of the new biology*. Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne. 48-64.

Waldrop, M. (1992). *Complexity: the emerging science at the edge of order and chaos*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Weedon, C. (1987). *Feminist practice & poststructuralist theory*. London: Blackwell.

Endnotes

i All italicized writing (with the exception of quotes, or places of emphasis) is written from within a role drama about residential schools, designed and led by **Beverley Machele, Matt Chenoweth, Yasushi Kadota, & Stephen Vachon**, four adult students in a drama-in-education course, University of British Columbia, July, 1997. The tribal ribbons were lengths of coloured masking tape attached to our shirts, above our hearts. The experience, language, and expression of drama is, for many, a lost practice, embodied in forgotten childhoods of imagination and play. The drama-in-education course reawakens students' ability to reimagine themselves in a variety of roles and situations within different role dramas.

A role drama (or role play) is a drama activity where participants explore in role an imaginary world created by the teacher in collaboration with his or her students. An imaginary world, for example, might be a town where citizens respond to the bankruptcy of the local fish processing plant; a medieval kingdom whose peasants are planning a revolution in protest of high taxes; a conference of pigs and wolves discussing the issue of unauthorized home demolitions. Students take on the roles of individuals who live and work within the imaginary world. They speak, respond, and make choices of action from the perspective and position of their role *as if* they were individuals living within that situation. Tarlington and Verriour (1991) explain that "Role drama is a powerful method of teaching that aims at promoting a change of understanding or insight for the participants. It is like walking in someone's shoes – exploring the thoughts and feelings of another person by responding and behaving as that person would in a given situation" (p. 9). The role drama described in this chapter involved an imaginary First Nations community and residential school in which students were invited to take on roles of First Nations children, parents, and grandparents. The leaders of the role drama played a variety of roles including a

government official, a priest, a guard, and a residential school principal. Students in role create possible new worlds through which perspectives, personal and communal actions, and cultural values may be explored both during the role drama and upon collective and individual reflection at the drama's completion.

ii **For the purposes of this paper, critical applied linguistics draws from the works of Alistair Pennycook (1999) and Brian Lynch (2000) as cited in McGivern (2001) which establish characteristics for a critical approach to applied linguistics. These characteristics include: an interest in domains such as gender, class, ethnicity, and the ways language and language related issues are interconnected; the notion that research needs to consider paradigms beyond the dominant, positivist-influenced research approach; a concern for changing the human and social world not just describing it; and the requirement that critical applied linguistics be self-reflexive. See McGivern (2001).**

iii The original quote from theatre director, Eugenio Barba, reads "Not walls of cement...but the melodies of your temperature" (Barba, 1995: 162). We have taken the liberty to replay his words; we hope that the spirit and intent of what he wrote breathes within our rewritten lines.

iv The third space, within this context, refers to the generative space created through performance, a space that simultaneously straddles and intersects the shared physical space of the classroom and the imaginary world(s) created through performance. Within this third space, are the interactive world(s) of embodied experiences and imaginations of participants in creative action and interaction. Literary theorist Homi Bhabha describes the "third space" as a process of hybridity which "enables other positions to emerge...The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (p. 211). For further elaboration of the "third space" see *The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha* in Rutherford, Jonathan (ed.) *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990: pp. 207-221.

v The term "intertextual" refers to the interchange that occurs between two or more individuals through embodied language. If we consider an individual as a text which engages in conversation and interaction from a perspective that arises from personal, communal, cultural, social, political, economic, ethnic, gendered experience and identity, then there are multiple possible dynamics that may come into play within an interchange between two individuals. This intertextual interchange is situated within the context of an environment which is itself a text influenced by and reflective of historical, economic, political, social, and cultural significance. Therefore, when two second language students enter into conversation, a complexity and multiplicity of possible intertextual recognitions may arise.

vi In this chapter, one author (Lynn Fels) writes as a performing arts educator and uses the first pronoun to identify her work. The remaining work is co-written, using the plural we, and is guided by the experience of the second author (Lynne McGivern) whose experience combines theatre and English as a second language teaching.

vii “Embodied play” is a term we use for drama in recognition of the *active and simultaneous engagement of mind, body and imagination*. Embodied play acknowledges a holistic recognition of an individual’s creative and active exploration within an imagined environment and situation. The term is a gentle reminder to educators that learning through drama is holistic, interactive and student-centered, involving critical and creative thinking and participation. For example, when asked to improvise, students speak, respond, and act *as if* they are present in the proposed situation, taking their cues from context, environment, prior knowledge, and in response to each other. The resulting scene is a product arising from the children’s own creative actions and decision-making rather than the result of a written script or a prescribed set of teacher-imposed directions. The emergent interactions draw simultaneously on the body, mind, and imagination of each student, as they improvise the scene. Embodied play includes dramatic activities such as improvisation, role play, tableau, soundscapes, and writing-in-role.

viii First Nations people is used in reference to Canadian aboriginals in respect to their political, cultural, and historical presence in Canada.

ix The term “interstanding” is used instead of “understanding” because it speaks to the learning that happens in the interrelational spaces of interaction. Taylor & Saarinen (1994) state that “understanding has become impossible because nothing stands under (p. Interstanding 2). Interstanding has become unavoidable because everything stands between.” We chose the word interstanding because it is through the interplay between the “known world(s),” and the “not-yet known world(s),” that performance breathes learning into presence. See Fels (1998). (Pages in Taylor and Saarinen’s book, *Imagologies*, are numbered by chapter title and page sequence within that chapter).

x “Space-moment” speaks simultaneously to a space of embodied time and place. Space-moment acknowledges Heidegger’s proposal that rather than seeing time and space as being separate entities, time and space are embodied as a single entity which he labels “time-space.” We use the word “moment” rather than “time” to signal the creative action and interaction that occurs during that “time” within which possibilities (and absences) may be realized and recognized. See Fels & Meyer (1997).

xi For the purposes of this chapter, “performance” refers to explorations through drama. However, performance also encompasses the creative processes of dance, writing, music, and visual and media arts. Similarly, a “performative inquiry” may involve the investigative tools of dance, visual and media arts, music, writing in tandem with or separate from those of drama.

xii “Action-site of learning” refers to the performative space within which creative action and interaction create opportunities for learning. Learning is simultaneously realized within a space and action which are not separate from each other, but interdependent and interrelational. For example, in our residential role drama, the action-site of learning identifies the performative space within which participants interact in role as First Nations children, and through their interactions and choices of action, may come to possible moments of learning. See Fels &

Stothers (1996) for their conceptualization of performance as an action-site of learning. See also Fels (1998).

xiii An etymological reading of the word “performance” brings us to *form* as structure and *ance* as action, as in (d)ance. *Per* prescribes the adjacent *form* and brings with it the meaning of “utterly, throughout and through”, but also, “to do away, away entirely or to (the) destruction of.” So we may read performance then as *simultaneously through form and through the destruction of form we come to action*. See. Fels & Stothers (1996). Understanding that action is “knowing, doing, being, creating” (Fels, 1995), we recognize the learning that happens through performance. This reading of performance locates performance “on the edge of chaos” where, straddling the world(s) of structure and chaos, complexity theorist claim life dances into being. See also Waldrop (1992).

xiv In this situation, we are referring to the creative processes of drama. However the investigative creative processes within visual and media arts, music, writing, and dance are also action-sites of learning.

xv Within a role drama, students have the unique opportunity to simultaneously view and experience a dramatic moment or situation from two different perspectives, simultaneously experiencing the situation in role and as individuals with unique identities and histories of experience.

xvi Not all possible aha! moments are simultaneously nor universally realized and recognized within the immediate performance; however, they may be embodied within the role drama and recognized at the completion of the role drama during the debriefing process as students and teacher reflect on their experience.

xvii A “not yet real world” or “imaginary world” is the performative world(s) created by participants through performance (e.g. a variety of possible dramatic processes, conventions, and activities). Participants are aware of the imaginary world they are creating: a not yet real world(s) which co-emerges within the “real world(s)” of everyday life. For the purpose of this chapter, both the not yet real world(s) and the real world(s) are understood as a multiplicity of dynamic temporal worlds folding one into the other, within which the known and unknown, absence and possibility exist simultaneously. We do not wish to suggest a dichotomy nor the existence of two separate worlds. An imaginary or not yet real world(s) is not a separate entity from the real world(s) but co-evolving in creative action and interaction. It is the interstices of these worlds (real and not yet real) that is the “third space” or performative space in which “aha!” moments – i.e., space-moments of learning– may be individually or collectively recognized.

xviii Knowing that we live not in a single one-dimensional world but within multiple temporal dynamic world(s) of actions and interactions, possibilities, absences and multi-dimensional relationships. Our world(s) is not realized in isolation but in action and interaction with multiple worlds co-emerging, co-evolving through our knowing, doing, being, creating with others (Fels, 1995).

xix Curriculum theorist, Dr. Ted Aoki, in conversation with Lynn Fels during her thesis defense in which he inquires about the “impossible” i.e. that which is not yet possible to imagine into being – that which remains beyond our grasp, like the force that moves the tides, unseen yet present in all our innocence and ignorance of being, becoming. **March 29th, 1999.**

xx Dramatic (re)play speaks both the dramatic playing in role of a situation, and the replay experienced through reflection and shared conversation.

xxi Applebaum, 1995: 15, 16.

xxii A student in role may take on a variety of roles throughout a role drama. In the residential school role drama, the Japanese male ESL student played both a government official and the residential school principal.