

Intentionality of learning in a theatrical production: Four Hong Kongers learn and teach

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Abstract

A theatrical production is an educational activity, but it differs greatly from a class with a teacher. There are no learning objectives. There is only a performance objective: to put on a show. Much of the learning that goes on still depends on intentionality, but it is the intentionality of the learners that is in question. Learners come to the show in the awareness that there are certain things to be learned. Those who wanted to build confidence were aware that performance is difficult, and depended on that difficulty to create the experience of mastery for them. The unintentional learning that accompanied the experience of mastery formed the climax of the participant narratives as the meaningful and unexpected outcome of their intentionality of learning. The aim of this paper is to define how four young Hong Kong teachers recalled the production and other experiences of drama and theatre when they were student-teachers, how they were themselves using drama in their work as English teachers, and how they understood learning in both roles. The four teachers' role is examined using a theoretical framework of intentionality of learning within a narrative approach. This method allows for a closer perspective of the learning experience in a theatre production where intentions of learning and the actual learning experience are embedded in the educational and sociocultural elements of the learning environment.

Keywords: *Intentionality, learn and teach, theatre, Hong Kongers*

Introduction

In practice, we usually think that the most important intention in the classroom is that of the teacher. Education students learn the great importance of having "clear objectives," and we assume that students learn, if anything, what they are taught. The intentions of students are important in so far as they match those of the teacher, in so far as students "pay attention" and work diligently at their assignments. We worry about "motivation" in terms of conformity between the student's desires and those of the teacher or of the curriculum designer. Students, however, may want to learn, without for all that matching the intentions of the teacher. This paper will examine an educational situation in which the authority figure does not intend to teach them anything, and yet the students learn: a theatrical production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. We shall see that students learn in conformity with two things: their own intentions on beginning the project, and the pressures of the situation, arising from common commitment to an aesthetic project. We shall see that their constructions of the director in their narratives conform to their educational intentions, making the director, in their minds, what they need him to be.

Theatrical productions have traditionally been viewed as educational for the participants, and yet it is hard to say what students learn from them. There are many possibilities. They may learn about the world of the text, about the process of producing theatre, about concentration. They may learn social skills from their close relations with others in the play. They may learn many things from watching the interpretive process of performers, or from the process of preparing their own performance. Where the play is in a second language, as here, they may learn language skills in a range of ways: from the memorized lines in the text; from the instruction in stress and intonation to be had from the director; from the ambient immersion experience of a production directed in the second language.

This project looks specifically at student actresses (all female by happenstance) who go on shortly afterwards to become teachers of English language at the secondary level. Research questions are:

- What do student participants learn from this production, and from others they may have been involved in?
- What, if anything, do they bring from the process of learning into their teaching, whether to the classroom from day to day or to their own theatrical efforts with school drama clubs or elsewhere?

As both questions are presented at the beginning of each interview, we expect participants would focus from the beginning on kinds of learning that would subsequently be of help in teaching.

The method chosen for this paper is narrative. The idea of learning itself carries potential narrativity.¹ To learn is to move from a less desirable state to a more desirable one, from ignorance or incompetence to knowledge or competence. Change of state combined with intentionality creates the preconditions of narrative. It is possible to discuss this process without narrating, that is by refraining from mentioning any events, but it is difficult and unnatural. We expect that each of our participants, asked about learning, would tell the story of how she learns something in sequential order, beginning with some characterization of lack in the initial state, and ending with an explicit or implicit account of what the new, better state is. Three of four narrations of learning included here begin with intentionality, from an awareness of lack, and moving to fullness of knowledge or competence. One sets out the circumstances in which the awareness of a problem and its solution comes to consciousness simultaneously.

We expect, then, some kind of overall narrative of learning, a macronarrative, quite possibly with shorter narrative segments dealing in similar form with more specific kinds of learning. In going through *Macbeth* and other productions, we asked about phases of the production, beginning with auditions and carrying on through rehearsals to performance and finally the cast party. By doing this, we elicited from participants a micronarrative of the production, implying quite a different narrative thrust from the main narrative of learning: for this list of topics implies a narrative of getting a show out rather than a narrative of learning. This difference gets at the distinctiveness of a theatrical production as a learning environment: students learn not only because they are being taught, or are participating in activities designed for learning, but also (and as it turns out primarily) because they are part of a common project that is not immediately educational but aesthetic in its goals.

Intentionality of learning and teaching

For decades, how one learns has been of interest to researchers in many disciplines, and consequently many theories of learning have surfaced in psychology. Most of these theories have originated from the traditional Skinnerian stimulus-response method, where the relationship between the learner and the environment is static. More recent theories take a social-constructive approach that allows the learner to build knowledge in authentic and novel ways (Olson & Hergenbahn, 2009; Bandura, 1971). Intention is often fundamental to the latter views.

There is a distinction in the psychological literature between explicit and implicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is the ability to explain a principle, and implicit knowledge is the ability to function in a given context (Broadbent, Fitzgerald, & Broadbent, 1986). Notoriously, in language learning, a person may be able to explain a grammatical principle without being able to apply it, and the reverse. The two relate differently to the process of learning, and consequently to intentionality in learning. Explicit learning results from a highly conscious intention to learn, where implicit learning may be tacit: a child learns a first language not by understanding principles, but by constant practice, perhaps with no formed intention to learn anything. This does not mean, however, that intentions are irrelevant to the acquisition of

¹ Gérard Genette, (1988), the single most influential theorist of narrative, writes, "[f]or me, as soon as there is an action or an event, even a single one, there is a story because there is a transformation, a transition from one state to a later and resultant state" (1988, p. 19). David Herman develops this insight in the first chapter of *Story Logic* (2002). The neurologist Antonio Damasio (1999) suggests that this form, which he views as preverbal, is basic to the development and functioning of consciousness (p.168ff.). On the importance of intentionality, Monika Fludernik (2009) writes, "Texts describing genes during cellular fission are only 'narrative' to the extent that they outline sequences of events" (2009, p. 6). Real narratives have human or anthropomorphized characters, i.e. characters able to have intentions.

implicit knowledge. Baddeley (1990) has found that the extent to which one retains learning has to do with the deliberate intention to learn and the related experience that one gains during the process of learning. Prior experience that learners carry with themselves predetermine some of these intentions that they put forward towards future learning (Wachob, 2000; Gow et al., 1996). Along with the original intentions of participating to achieve certain goals, a learner would accrue another form of experience that results from the context of learning. This form of experience is usually known as experiential or unintentional learning – that which the learner acquires from situated and meaningful interactions and instructions within the learning environment (Lave & Wenger, 2005). Unintentional learning happens when a learner internalizes and conceptualizes a situational context that contains the cultural and psychological tools of society. In a theatrical production, the learners' interactions with the production crew, text and props are situated elements contributing to the experience and consequently the learning process.

Intentionality and mode of learning and teaching

Hulstijn (2005) employs the notion of intentionality in his examination of second language vocabulary acquisition. He suggests that the intentionality of the learner is an important ingredient in learners' retention of their vocabulary, but that incidental learning is equally important. He concludes that although the concepts of intentional and incidental learning have outlived their usefulness in terms of second language acquisition, they could still be of value to understanding teaching and learning within a second language education and pedagogy.

Taking Hulstijn's (2005) cue, we reviewed recent studies in the field of education and psychology that used intentionality of learning as their theoretical paradigm. Allen (2008) finds that tertiary students were better prepared learners with clearer outcomes when they deliberately reflected on and planned their learning. Allen's study shows support for the connection between intentionality and learning. In a similar vein, Ross and Fray (2009) propose a purposeful learning model which extends the idea of learning acts or behavior that are rooted in the learners' intention to take the lead in constructing their understanding and knowledge. This means that learners approach their learning with the prior intention to comprehend aspects of the tasks. These studies show that learning and teaching that contain elements of intentionality are crucial to the development of learners in relation to their context. These, however, are learner intentions evaluated in terms of their conformity with the teacher's intentions.

Papadopoulou and Birch (2009), in their phenomenological perspective on young children's engagement with their surroundings, appropriate a definition of intentionality drawn from Maurice Merleau-Ponty for this purpose. Operative intention is an intentionality of the mind, a turning of the mind toward something. Act intention arises from operative intention: the subject perceives something and makes a decision to act. Papadopoulou and Birch discuss both sorts of intention as inferred from the behavior of young children and the consequences of children's intentionality for their learning. The notion of intentionality is also inherent in the structures of our languages: in English, we speak of "wanting to do something," or "turning our attention to something." People express their intuitive understanding of intentionality in their own learning through common-sense expressions like this.

Papadopoulou and Birch (2009) find that the intentionality of learners cannot be isolated from the context in which they choose to exercise those intentions. The authors asserted that "all experience of the world must involve an active consciousness, or else an engaged mind, which reaches out to the world and also a body, which has a physical presence and lives the experience" (Papadopoulou & Birch, 2009, p. 272). In other words, intentionality in learning is a response to the learner's perception of context. Where the learner consciously and actively chooses the context, it may be especially significant to the learner, and so determine in part the development of the learner's intention to learn. This learning from environment is separable from the teacher, and may be attached to the learner alone.

The teacher always says and does things that are not part of the explicit project of teaching, and these constitute a part of the learning environment. Burbules (2008), in his reflection on Wittgenstein's model of practice, argues that tacit teaching, which problematizes the intentionality of the teacher within an informal setting of pedagogy, is a powerful tool for learning. Tacit teaching is teaching that occurs in an implied manner. Tacit teaching includes the sort of intentional and non-intentional informal instruction that can be found in a performance-based setting. Tacit teaching also includes teaching by modeling.

This kind of teaching may provide scaffolding that can guide learners to formulate their own version of understanding, especially when it is in a performance-based setting that requires practice. Burbules further suggests that tacitness or indirection of teaching is sometimes part of what makes it effective as an approach to instruction—a more "direct" approach, even if possible, would not have the same effects. It would not help the learner go beyond a specific skill to the development of a wider set of practical judgments and understandings that actually constitute autonomous mastery of a complex performance. In Wittgenstein's phrase: to be able to go on, on their own (p. 673). Thus, learners become autonomous with the experience and knowledge that they gain from tacit teaching and learning where intentional and unintentional elements are subtly embedded.

Method

In this project, we took care to preserve participants' own construction of their experience. We wanted to see how they themselves understood what had happened, what they had learned and how, in a nuanced and authentic manner. We therefore quote them word-for-word wherever possible, for it is in the precision of their own words that the representation of their experience is most authentic. We have paid careful attention to narrative structure, for that structure belongs to them, and it is in narrative structure that we see what goals they were pursuing and how they understood the process of achieving them.

The interviewers asked about participants' experience in chronological order:

1. Experience of theatre in chronological order, including *Macbeth*.
2. The job search.
3. Use of drama in classroom teaching.
4. Involvement in theatre productions as teacher in charge (or, frequently, one of two or more teachers in charge) at a school.
5. A final summary of views of education and the relevance, if any, of theatre to it.

This chronological order encouraged the development of narrative, but did not require it. We hoped that participant narratives would reveal the significance of events and experiences to themselves and their role and identity as teachers.

Participants had the opportunity to present an overall narrative of their lives in theatre, subdividable into narrative segments of particular productions. While these shorter segments almost necessarily take narrative form, the overall progression from experience in school through *Macbeth* to use of theatre as a teacher would not necessarily, for there might be no overall narrative drive or purpose in the progression in time.

Findings

The four participants all expressed a belief both in the educational value of the production and in their own ability to use this learning as teachers. In three of four cases initial intentions on joining the theatre production were obvious in the narratives. Their experience matched those intentions, making the learning outcome positive and purposeful for their future role as teachers.

Two of four participants state that they came to audition for the play hoping to increase confidence. One, Betsy, had never been very confident, and had been discouraged in the first two years of her degree. The other, Ginette, says that she was confident and active in secondary school, but, being from a Chinese-medium school, felt inferior in her English to graduates of English-medium schools. She lost her confidence, and was discouraged in her first two years. Both say they gained confidence in their immersion semester overseas, in semester one of year three. Both had a subsequent positive experience: Betsy had done well in a speaking contest, and Ginette had received a high mark on a listening test. Both indicate that they wished to use their increased self-efficacy in English to work toward a wider self-efficacy. Ginette explains:

So for that assessment, the last listening task, I was the only one who got 100%....That was why my confidence came back.

All right, so, you came and auditioned for Macbeth in the first week of October of your fourth year. Why did you come and audition?

Because ... I wanted to do something to prove I was OK.

She had a technical competence in English, and was seeking something broader, an improved self-image. Betsy specified what she thought would bring her more confidence: "recognition." Both say that they succeeded in becoming more confident. Betsy recalls watching and admiring the acting skills of some other actresses. She says they were "very expressive, very confident." In this statement, we perceive the significance of expressiveness to her: expressiveness is a part of good performance and also evidence of confidence. If one can be expressive and not wooden on the stage, one can be confident of being able to perform well in the future. She recalls my work as director largely in terms of encouraging and modulating expression. My role for her, then, was not primarily authoritative, but rather encouraging and constructively critical. I did not induce her to do anything in her narrative, but rather enabled her to do something. When she remembers other actors, she remembers her judgments on their degree of expressiveness. She was very nervous at the time of performance, and nevertheless enjoyed the whole experience "a lot." That functioned for her as experience of mastery, and that mastery was generalizable to being a teacher:

Can you think what you learned from the process of doing drama that can affect you as a teacher?

Confidence.

Yes.

I built up my confidence from a different performance.

Ginette's narrative has parallels, but is much more complicated, for her understanding of good performance as a means to confidence is much more complicated. Where Betsy referred to only a few ways of learning, Ginette presents a wider range. She recalls that I had stressed the need for focus, and that she had not fully understood what I wanted. Finding her performance insufficient, she set out to learn in various ways. One physical challenge was in a performance in a garden. As there were no wings, I asked actors to turn their backs when not onstage. It was difficult to keep still in that situation. Here is Ginette's account of learning to do this:

I remember the first few times we didn't do it well, and we upset some other people. (laughs)

Who were the other people?

You. (Both laugh)

So we... Actually, we were so scared, and we told each other, we have to stand still, don't move... (Both laugh) ... or Matthew will kill us. (Both laugh)

We see here the director's function in insisting on focus, on performers' need to remain physically in control, and we see the actress or the cast collectively, focusing and concentrating. For Ginette, I was significant as an authority figure, one who in some sense coerces. She also felt the need to focus emotions within. Like Betsy, she modeled herself on other actresses whose performance impressed her. She recalls that in learning to act the women's departure from the palace, she also used emotional memory and imagination:

And I just reread the story, and I know this is my role, that I was sent out from the master, and I must have to be angry, and then, how angry. I took her place: if I

were sent out, and my Mom didn't love me any more, and then why? Why do you love other sisters and not me, and then my emotions came up.

By doing these things, she believes that she learned to be expressive and therefore confident in self-presentation. In each case, she presents a narrative segment: she perceives that she needed to do something in terms of showing expression, or just keeping still. She sees that her performance is insufficient, she marshals her resources to meet the challenge, and she succeeds.

Betsy and Ginette both use the warm-up we used in production with their own students, not only in doing drama, but also in class. They are teaching students to deal with the negative effects of emotional arousal. Both report working as actresses when they teach. Betsy is rather general about this, but Ginette is quite vivid:

But in classwork, I will still do the expression thing with them, and I will ask them to do some role-play. And for me, there is another change as well. Inside the classroom, I am like an actress, and I make very funny expression and emotion and I will sometimes crazily, and do something crazily, and then they laugh at me and they focus on me, and they pay attention, and see what I am talking about. And then it draws their attention, and they love English.

Betsy also stresses the need to be "not afraid to use English." Ginette believes she has brought the benefit of the experience of mastery to students:

So, in that drama, because I let them know that actually it is not that difficult. You can do it, and their classmates can do it. And it's a proof that they can do it, and that's why they have self-confidence. And I observed that they all did very well academically after that. And they all entered the A class after that drama.

Ginette and Betsy, then, had a strong intention when they came to auditions, but the result of their participation was only partly related to that intention: the definition of good performance was modulated for them in the course of rehearsal, and so, consequently, was their means of gaining confidence.

Anna was fairly experienced in theatre when she first came to audition. She had had roles in three plays before *Macbeth*. She wanted to learn more about theatre, and in particular wanted to be part of the technical side. She can identify particular things that she learned from each production. The first, in secondary school, carried quite a simple lesson: theatre may be memorable and life-changing. She passes lightly over the substance of the play, but says, "I still have the mental pictures" of that production. She later uses the same phrase to set out her hopes for students' memories of her own productions. In the second, a fairy tale for primary students, she learned about audience response. In the third, she observes that the director was a tough disciplinarian, and she reflects on the advantages and disadvantages of this approach in contrast to my own style, which she sees as more relaxed. The whole interview gives an impression of calm development of increasing understanding. Where Betsy and Ginette focused on the experience of being on the stage, and the use of focus and emotional pressure in building confidence, Anna speaks as an observer of different directors' techniques.

When Anna comes to talk about her own students, however, it is on different terms. Although she had not referred to any confidence problems of her own, she wants students to learn confidence. Although, unlike Elizabeth, she makes little reference to ethical progress of her own, she wants students to learn self-respect and mutual respect. In short, despite the strong intentionality of her own approach to theatrical experience, she is depending on the pressures of the common project to build students' ethical selves.

Anna, despite the impression of control that she gives, has one moment when she recalls learning something unexpectedly:

In one of the shows that I screamed and then when I went to backstage and you said, "That was a very good scream, Anna." (laughing) I was so pleased. Not actually the language you use. It's the scream.

The last two sentences make a pithy, strong statement of the importance of expression to theatre, which otherwise she does not discuss. In general, the terms of her discussion of theatre are not those of an actress, but of a director. The vivid portrayal of the pressures of performance appears only here. The incident suggests an awareness of learning from the pressures of performance that otherwise does not surface within this interview, and which may well form the basis of her view of drama in education.

Elizabeth shows no clear intention in auditioning for the play. Elizabeth consistently says she auditioned simply because I asked her to. That is, she starts out her narrative not as agent, but more modestly as executor of an action, carrying out an action initiated by another person, me. Her accounts of her two dramatic productions have certain things in common, but no overall narrative structure appears until the end, when one unanticipated event gives significance to the others in retrospect:

I didn't know that I had to put on that weird, strange, ugly wig, before the performance. It was only a few days before the performance. I was crying, I remember. And then, Michelle was comforting me, and "Ginette" was saying, it doesn't matter, it's a play. ... But I felt that, How can I put that on? It's so ... I don't know the adjective. I don't like that anyway. At night, I received an e-mail.... You said, there's already a lot of troubles going on. Don't give me more troubles, or something like that. At that time, I realized that I have to not just think on my own, not just get all the good things for myself, but I have to look at the whole picture. I put on the wig, not because you tell me to, but because I know that it is part of the show. If everybody is cooperating, the show will be good. If one of them doesn't follow the rules, the show may be ruined. So I would really want the students to think about the whole picture. The teacher doesn't do one thing for one particular student. It's for the whole class.

This anecdote brings together elements of her overall narrative. She had been in a student production in secondary school. She talks about discussions and disagreements among students with great satisfaction. In talking about rehearsals for *Macbeth*, she hardly mentions me, the director. Instead, she recalls working with the other witches to perfect their segments, getting suggestions from other actors and actresses. In recalling those early performances, her mind turns toward co-operation among equals. That is, she narrates the process while excluding the intentionality of the director. She is in the first instance very subordinate and in the second instance avoids dealing with the director's authority at all.

In this anecdote also, she emphasizes an essential lesson of the experience for her: Focus on the overall pattern, not on the individual. In a conflict between her personal desires and the demands of the show, she made a decision for the show. With aphoristic force, she says,

I put on the wig, not because you tell me to, but because I know that it is part of the show.

When asked what she wants students to learn above all, she said, "Responsibility," and referred again to the anecdote above.

The narrative moves, then, from a value placed on successful co-operation as interaction among friends to a more structured value system. The second state includes a legitimate place for an authority figure, the director, and a demand for responsibility from participants based on an independent assessment of the value of a common project. The second state appears as positive. The first state appears as lesser than the first only in retrospect, as something positive in itself but insufficient to the participant's increasingly adult role.

This kind of learning notably comes not from the intentions of the learner, nor from the intentions of the director, but rather from the situation itself. The fact of putting on a play creates a demand for focus on the show, the overall project, the "big picture." When I sent her the e-mail, I had no intention of teaching her a lesson about responsibility. I insisted on the need to get a show out, and that was why she learned what she learned. Her "not because you tell me" suggests an unwillingness to conform to au-

thority as authority, but a willingness to conform to authority as legitimate, as promoting a common goal of performance.

Discussion

This paper examines four Hong Kongers who participated in a theatrical production while they were students at a teacher education tertiary institution. Their receptiveness in using theatre as a mode of learning gave them a way to further their own learning and teaching (Kennedy, 2002). A theatrical production is an educational activity, but it differs greatly from a classroom situation. As opposed to classroom learning which would have a learning objective, the theatre, in the first instance, offers a performance objective. Much of the learning that goes on with the performance still depends on intentionality, but it is the intentionality of the learners that is mainly in question (Papadopoulou & Birch, 2009; Hulstijn, 2005; Burbules, 2008).

Burbules (2008) suggests that tacit teaching is a powerful tool for learning. Each of the four participants in this study gained something that she felt she needed for her career as a teacher from one or more theatrical productions: confidence, knowledge of theatre, a conception of responsibility. If I the director taught them these things, it was only tacitly, and yet my "teaching" appears to have been very effective. In three cases, a key element lay in the intention of the learner to learn something specific from the production. Though I had no idea students needed to develop in these areas, the students themselves knew very well and were able to project that the production could give them what they needed. Hence, the intention of the learner bridged my tacit teaching in the capacity of director to help with the construction of the "world" in Papadopoulou and Birch's (2009) sense.

We have seen that the demands of performance played a key role in the development both of Betsy and of Ginette. Since they had to focus all their attention and energy on performing well, they were able to feel that they had accomplished something difficult. The difficulty of the task created a very powerful "experience of mastery," in Bandura's (1971) phrase, allowing them to generalize a tentative and specialized confidence to a wider confidence in performance, or self-efficacy, including performance of teaching. The mastery resulted in higher confidence, a reason for Betsy's and Ginette's intention to join the theatrical production – a planned outcome of intentional learning, as observed by Allen (2008).

Elizabeth's case is different from the others, for she reports no intention to learn anything in particular from the production. In her case, Merleau-Ponty's operative intentionality comes into play, the intentionality of the consciousness focusing upon a situation, an object, a question. As she presents the issue, when she was upset about the wig, her intentionality was upon herself, her own desire to look good, to be admired. Her view of the situation changed when her intentionality turned toward "the big picture," the needs of the larger group project. Her intentionality of consciousness at that moment shifted to an intentionality of action. She decided that she would give herself to the show. She put on the wig, and she performed.

For Betsy, Ginette and Anna, the significance of the production is chiefly in what they gained, in the results of the process. For Elizabeth, the most important thing is the memory of the shift, the moment when she decided, as she put it later, to "be responsible," and do what must be done. Elizabeth's case casts light upon Ginette's as well. Ginette gives much detail on her own operative intentionality in the course of the production, what I the director, in theatrical fashion, call "focus." She needed to keep her mind on the dramatic situation, the emotions involved, on the need to control her body and voice. In her own view, this experience created expressiveness in her, the ability to call easily upon expressiveness in the confidence that she can use it effectively in class. Ginette's case lies between that of Betsy and that of Anna: in the course of achieving her explicit objective, increased confidence, she also learned a great deal about theatre and performance, which she also used in subsequent teaching. She learned what she learned because of her focus on her situation as an actress, and the demands of the show over the demands of her personal desires or offence taken at the director's roughness.

All four report that the experience of the production brought them something that they have used in their teaching. All except Elizabeth express a belief that students can learn confidence from performance. All except Betsy express a belief that students can learn good values from the experience of

cooperating with others in theatre. All four view themselves as autonomous in their teaching careers in part because of what they learned from this production. All four have also directed or co-directed theatre within the two years between *Macbeth* and this study. They are "able to go on, on their own."

Related to the autonomy of participants is participants' construction of the authority of the director. We have seen that Betsy views the director as purveyor of helpful advice and constructive criticism about expressiveness. For her, the director has authority because he has sound judgment. For Ginette, the director has problematic and dictatorial authority, but that problematic nature is justified in the end for two reasons: the play was an aesthetic success, and the director's "fierceness" created valuable solidarity in the cast. For Elizabeth, the director's authority is so problematic that she avoids discussing it, preferring to remember episodes of cooperation. The wig incident brings a latent issue to a head, and she concludes that the director has legitimate authority because he legitimately insists on a common project. Anna alone stands back from the director, viewing his behavior less as an experience and more as an object of thought. She reflects upon her observation of directorial behavior apparently in order to construct her own directorial persona. Elizabeth and Anna in particular portray themselves playing the role of director as they constructed it through this experience. The student-teachers are therefore able, within limits, to mould the image of the director into what they need for their own education. Their statements about the director, if taken as factual, contradict each other mutually. If taken as part of a construction of the director giving participants what they needed from the production, these statements make good sense.

Burbules (2008) remarks:

Role models ... often recognize that they are being observed and imitated as models, and may even desire to be. ... But it is also essential to this form of teaching that the precise meaning and impact of such exemplary actions is often beyond the control of the model. It may be done in order to demonstrate a particular idea or principle, but it may be seen and interpreted according to a very different set of assumptions. The pertinent aspects of the action for the actor (how and why it is done, for example) may not be the aspects picked out by those who are learning from it.

These statements are all true of this situation. The learners' act of "picking out" here manifests operative intentionality. Learners are active here in a way that offers confirmation to the assertions on learning of Papadopoulou and Birch (2009). Their findings were based on pre-school children and ours on young adults. Their participants were Greek and ours are Chinese. The intentionality of the learner would seem to be an essential part of the learning process across a wide range of cultures and developmental stages.

Conclusion

Our findings raise a number of issues about education within a mode of theatre production. First, how far can these results be generalized? Was this a unique production, or do all productions have similar impacts on intentionality of learning to a greater or lesser extent? How far can similar statements be made about theatrical activities on a different style?

If students devise a play through improvisation, do they gain similar things, or different ones? The place of the director is certainly different, but given the freedom of participants to construct the director's image to suit themselves, we cannot predict what findings there may be. We have seen that these participants learned things that they needed for their careers as teachers. Is it generally true that future teachers will gain similar things from theatrical activities? Is there a class of activities that allow education students similar freedom to mould themselves for their careers? Finally, how far do these findings reflect back on teaching in general?

Burbules (2008) asserted that there is a tacit element to any education, referring back to the notion of "hidden curriculum" popular in the seventies. Given that students are free to construct their teachers' images in their own minds, how can they be given the freedom to construct their teachers' images to suit their own needs? Burbules (2008) also stressed that even though the tacitness of learning may be more obvious in one setting than another, it must be general to all learning. We agree on this, and the



place of learner intentionality deserves attention in future research, whether it is in second language acquisition as Hulstijn (2005) suggested or in multidisciplinary application of theatre performance as encouraged by Nicholson (2009).

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