Identity and creativity: The transformative potential of drama lessons

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Introduction

In this chapter we aim to bring a Vygotskian perspective on creativity to bear on one aspect of Drama in Education. In schools, children's identities are, to some extent, prescribed and often they are placed in categories of need and difficulty. Schools also differ in the extent to which they maintain relations of power and control which are realised in 'status' relations witnessed in pedagogic practices. Children become 'pupils' or 'students' or become members of categories of attainment. Some may qualify for 'Free School Meals' (FSM) which is often taken as the prime index of poverty in the UK. Membership of this group is often, erroneously, assumed to be predictive of outcomes for a particular individual.

Pedagogic responses to children who are placed in categories associated with disadvantage are often characterised by increases in teacher control over the selection and sequencing of content, the pacing of progression through curriculum content, and the criteria of evaluation (Daniels, 2008). This is exemplified in a report of a comparison of low and high socio-economic status (SES) settings in Scotland, in which Duffield (1998) reports reduced levels of opportunity for discussion and the achievement of group consensus in low SES settings. She attributes this to teachers' anxiety about control and wariness about pupil autonomy in low SES settings. These low SES students are placed in pedagogic contexts which offer little by way of opportunity for engagement in the transformation of social relations, order and identity. The case description included in this chapter is an example of the way in which pupils who are on the FSM register can experience the transformative potential of drama in relation to identities within school and beyond. This represents a challenge to the understanding that 'drama' allows you to 'express yourself'; rather it suggests that drama provides opportunities for the exploration of identities which are fictitious but may also impact on the 'actual'. As such it provides all participants with respite from the constraints of notions of 'self' which arise when membership of

categories are allocated and pedagogies assume a focus on a narrow conception of learning.

Much has been made of the enduring poor attainment of pupils on the FSM register in comparison to their peers, whose 'identity of disadvantage in school' (FSM) may shape attitudes and values towards school in general and specifically towards practices of learning (e.g. Dolby & Dimitriadis, 2004 and Challenge the Gap)[1].) In many schools they are now seen as vulnerable. The irony of nature of this vulnerability appears to be lost. One response is that they are vulnerable to inappropriate pedagogies. In contrast to the rigid pedagogic practices that may operate within the rest of the curriculum, the drama classroom may offer a temporary lull through the creation of 'negotiated' identities and mediated relations of power and control. Drama is a powerful tool for creating contexts that may provide the opportunity to renegotiate identities.

Tools for creativity

Above all Vygotsky was seeking to develop a liberationist version of social formation in which rather than being pinioned by history, individuals contributed to the creation of cultural tools which they used to change the world. He developed accounts of human action and activity in which cultural artefacts, such as speech, mediate human engagement with aspects of the social, cultural historical situations in which they were located. These artefacts or tools are human products that are taken up, developed, and transformed in the course of human activity. The emphasis is on the social production of artefacts that can be used as tools of both personal and social development and change. This cultural historical perspective on creativity has been summarised by Glăveanu.

> The new artefact (material or conceptual) is seen as emerging within the relation between self (creator) and others (broadly understood as a community), all three being immersed into and in dialogue with an existing body of cultural artifacts, symbols and established norms. This model is not structural but dynamic since it is in the "tensions" between all four elements that creativity takes shape with the

[1] http://www.challengepartners.org/node/37

> “new artifact” becoming part of “existing culture” (for self and/or community) and constantly alimenting the creative cycle. (Glăveanu (2010a p.12)

Social and cultural tools are historical products, and creativity involves their deployment in the cultural context of the here-and-now. Vygotsky (2004) started with a conception of creativity as “a historical, cumulative process” (p. 30). This sense of creativity capitalizing on the past is exemplified in the following, more recent statement “the most eminent are those creators who best utilize the social and cultural tools and best fit with the social and cultural expectations of their time” (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003, p. 80).

The concern has been to develop an account in which humans were seen as “making themselves from the outside” rather than being dominated and controlled from the outside. Through acting on things in the world, they engage with the meanings that those things assumed within social activity. Humans both shape those meanings and are shaped by them. This understanding is exemplified in recent research on creativity when it is understood as: “studying the intrapersonal dynamics of creative processes in the context of the inter-personal relations that make it possible” (Glăveanu, 2010b, p. 63). From the perspective of learners who are deemed 'vulnerable' or whatever term is used to suggest low attainment, the question is as to whether they have access to the kind of interpersonal relations in the classroom that facilitate the intrapersonal dynamics of creative processes.

Creativity in schooling

In a seminal work, Vygotsky (2004) recognized the importance of the development of creativity through schooling and also rejected the notion of creativity as the product of sudden inspiration. He argued that the active promotion of creativity was a central function of schooling.

His analysis of the development of creativity is marked by an emphasis on interfunctional relations that resonates throughout his work. He argued that children are not necessarily more creative than adults; rather that they have less control and critical judgment over the products of their imagination. He suggests that as rational thought develops so does critical judgment, and that the tendency is for adolescents to become increasingly dissatisfied with the products of their imagination if they do

not acquire appropriate “cultural and technical factors” or tools with which to engage in creative activity.

Adults dismiss their creative output if they are not given the tools with which to be creative. In the context of this chapter, this position forces us to reflect on the ways in which lessons in drama can provide new tools for creativity not least by virtue of their capacity to bring multiple perspectives explicitly into view. It also prompts concerns about the ways in which provision is constructed for those considered to be 'vulnerable'. Is this provision always conducive to the development and celebration of creativity or is more preoccupied with conformity and control?

This position has been adapted by Wertsch and Tulviste who talk of creativity as ‘transformation of an existing pattern of action, a new use for an old tool’ (Wertsch and Tulviste 1996), and Wertsch (1991, 98) reminds us that individuals’ histories with regard to cultural tools are an important element in the development of mediated action. He argues that when Vygotsky uses the term ‘mental function’ he does so with reference to social interaction and to individual processes. In this sense mental functions may be seen to be carried by groups as well as individuals. He sees ability as the capacity to function with the tool and also talks of mind being socially distributed, belonging to dyads and larger groups who can think, attend and remember together (Wertsch 1991, 1998).

Thus, a Vygotskian understanding of creativity: acknowledges its pervasiveness; understands the centrality of tools for creativity; and recognizes the importance of the social organization of pedagogy that promotes creativity. When brought together these elements of practices that promote creativity have importance implications for learning that transforms identities.

Creativity in the Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky developed his well-known but frequently misunderstood, concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, as a means of discussing the way in which social and participatory learning takes place and development is facilitated (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). This was integrated into his theory of play. It was argued that in play the child could temporarily become ‘higher than his average age, higher than his

usual everyday behaviour; he is in play as if a head above himself (van der Veer and Valsiner, 1993, 44). This concept is often referenced in pedagogic initiatives which claim a Vygotskian heritage. However a myriad of misinterpretations bedevil much of this literature.

Chaiklin (2003) suggests that much of what has been discussed under the rubric of the ZPD misses the central theoretical insistence on social influences leading development. The distinction between microgenesis (in which small scale steps take place) and ontogenesis (which involves qualitative differences in developmental development) is missed in, what for Chaiklin, are misinterpretations of the original formulation of ZPD in its instructional frame of reference.

The term scaffolding, which is often deployed as an operational derivation of the ZPD, could be taken to infer a 'one-way' process within the 'scaffolder' constructs the scaffold alone and presents it for use to the novice. Sadly, this is so often the case with young people who schools see as vulnerable. Newman, Griffin & Cole, (1989) argued that the ZPD is created through negotiation between the more advanced partner and the learner, rather than through the donation of a scaffold as some kind of prefabricated climbing frame. There is a similar emphasis on negotiation in Tharp and Gallimore (1988), who discusse 'teaching as assisted performance' in those stages of the ZPD where assistance is required. The key question here seems to be with respect to where the 'hints', 'supports', or 'scaffold' comes from. Are they produced by 'the more capable partner' or are they negotiated? Vygotsky is unclear on this matter.

Chaiklin (2003) suggests that terms such as scaffolding should be reserved for practices which are designed to teach specific skills and subject matter concepts as against instruction designed to serve explicitly developmental purposes (Chaiklin, 2003, p. 59). With respect to creativity, Newman, Griffin, and Cole (1989) argued that the ZPD arises in negotiation between the more advanced partner and the learner, rather than through the donation of a scaffold as some kind of prefabricated climbing frame. Cole and Griffin (1983) mount a strong criticism of the scaffolding metaphor based on the extent to which the child's creativity is underplayed. The argument that different settings and activities give rise to spaces, within the ZPD for creative exploration rather than pedagogic domination, is at the heart of their

position: “Adult wisdom does not provide a teleology for child development. Social organization and leading activities provide a gap within which the child can develop novel creative analyses” (Cole and Griffin, 1983, p. 62). This carries important implications for pedagogic practice. The argument is that the creativity inherent in learning and transformation should be seen in dialogic terms rather than a skill to be transmitted. In the same way that Cole and Griffin caution against acts of pedagogic imperialism, Vygotsky urges us to recognise the centrality of creativity to the entire educational enterprise.

Creativity, learning and identity

Learning as a process is linked with identity formation as in Brown and Duguid (2000) who see learning as demand driven, a social act, and as identity formation. Lave and Wenger argue that persons ‘become’ as they come to progressively involve themselves with the activities of a community. In this way learning means to move from peripheral participation to full membership within a knowledge community (Lave and Wenger, 1991). This theme is also pursued by Holland, et al(1998) and Wenger (1998) who theorized identity as a ‘way of talking about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities’

> ‘We take identity to be a central means by which selves, and the sets of actions they organize, form and re-form over personal lifetimes and in the histories of social collectivities.’ (Holland, et al 1998, p. 270)

Dorothy Holland et al. (1998) have studied the development of identities and agency specific to historically situated, socially enacted, culturally constructed worlds. They reference Bakhtin (1978, 1986) and Vygotsky as they develop a theory of identity as constantly forming and person as a composite of many often contradictory, self understandings and identities which are distributed across the material and social environment and rarely durable (p. 8). They draw on Leontiev in the development of the concept of socially organized and reproduced figured worlds which shape and are shaped by participants and in which social position establishes possibilities for engagement. They also argue that figured worlds:

> [D]istribute ‘us’ not only by relating actors to landscapes of action (as personae) and spreading our senses of self across many different fields of activity, but also by giving the landscape human voice and tone.(Holland et al al, 1988, p8)

Holland et al deploy the Bakhtinian concept of the ‘space of authoring’ is deployed to capture an understanding of the mutual shaping of figured worlds and identities in social practice. Holland et al. also argue that multiple identities are developed within figured worlds and that these are “historical developments, grown through continued participation in the positions defined by the social organization of those world’s activity” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 41). Identity formation is a social activity that may take place is the unseen minutiae of interaction. It is as much a collective activity in the here and now as it has been through history.

> Just as electricity is equally present in a storm with deafening thunder and blinding lightning and in the operation of a pocket flashlight, in the same way, creativity is present, in actuality, not only when great historical works are born but also whenever a person imagines, combines, alters, and creates something new, no matter how small a drop in the bucket this new thing appears compared to the works of geniuses. When we consider the phenomenon of collective creativity, which combines all these drops of individual creativity that frequently are insignificant in themselves, we readily understand what an enormous percentage of what has been created by humanity is a product of the anonymous collective creative work of unknown inventors. (Vygotsky 2004 p. 10-11)

This points to the importance of the cultures of the school which form the setting for collective creative working and activity and the importance of the individual, the collective and the social in arriving at an understanding of the underlying processes and structures. The drama classroom provides a space for experimental refiguring of the landscape of the social world of the young person. Arguably this is particularly important for someone who has been positioned in the institutions of schooling as vulnerable, disadvantaged or unacceptable.

Further questions relate to the ways in which the 'figured' world of the drama lesson impacts on the 'real' everyday world. More specifically, how do the participants in the drama renegotiate themselves and the relation of others to them in the world beyond the drama classroom? The exchange during 'in role' work creates the possibility for such reorientations to meaning and understanding of the self. After this moment of in role work participants are able to be dissect, analyse and discuss. This has implications for all to extend their own maps of the world. Children are natural experts in this practice, from the moment they enter the school, they are shaped and formed by the social and cultural practices modelled by those already operating in that context.

This approach to a theory of identity in practice is grounded in the notion of a figured world in which positions are taken up constructed and resisted. We will now move to a discussion of the ways in which these understandings of processes of social formation may be relevant to drama in secondary schools.

Reflections on a transformative moment in a drama lesson

What follows is a case study drawn from the experience of teaching rather than a formal research project. It was selected in order to provide a glimpse of the way in which drama can provide the context for the exploration of reinterpretations of the past, resignification in the present, and new possibilities for the future. The challenge is to co-create a context in which participants accept the possibility of transformation (s). In doing so they may seek resolution or re-negotiation through the temporary 'role'. Bolton (1979) affirms the importance of creating fictional worlds that offer new perspectives on familiar worlds:

> Children can intellectually and emotionally exist simultaneously and effectually in two worlds; one real but suspended as far as necessary, and one that is fictional but it is the 'operational' world of the drama. (Bolton, 1979:20)

A useful example of this moment would be an exchange through 'improvisation' – a technique by which both participants adopt a role different to the socially and formally agreed one identified at the beginning of the discourse. Participants are able to enter a temporary moment of transformation and it is in this moment that, following

Holland et al (1998), ‘identities’ can be negotiated, through dialogue and action. In one sense they engage in the process of 'rewriting' themselves and repositioning themselves in the narratives of their everyday life. They may engage in some form of learning through being placed in situations in which tensions which previously been invisible are rendered visible and open to conscious reflection. They are both immersed in a context but also given the opportunity of distancing themselves from the events. This resonates with the view of development that Yaroshevsky (1989) attributes to Vygotsky . Rather than understanding a stage of development through the ladder like metaphor associated with Piaget, Yaroshevsky suggests that Vygotsky had a dramaturgical notion in mind when he invoked the word ‘stage’. The idea was that of a stage where two planes, the personal and the social, were in play. When these two planes collided as a result of incommensurability between personal understandings and social situations then a reforming of both may occur. Yaroshevsky argues that it was through his early association with the dramatist Stanislavsky and the poet Mandelstam (whose reading group he attended) that Vygotsky developed this understanding of ‘stage’. If it is the case that he was thinking in this way it certainly opens the way for an understanding of identity work as the recognition, and possibly the understanding of tensions and contradictions and their on-going resolution. Drama lessons can provide settings in which participants can both immerse themselves in the action of a Vygotskian stage and also seek to understand the ways in which personal change can become possible. The tools of drama can be used as a means of 'seeing' of the tensions that may exist in everyday social situations but remain unseen by those who are given or take up particular social positions. It is through the opportunity of gaining new perspectives on the familiar that it can become 'strange' and open to a new form of engagement.

One key element in the construction of pedagogic settings that promote creativity is the conscious adjustment of relations of power and control. Many drama practitioners will recognise the layout of a circle as a starting position for the lesson. Immediately, this configuration subverts the traditional layout of a classroom which positions the teacher at the front of the class with the pupils facing towards them. In a circle, the participants are encouraged to be inclusive and equal, with both pupils and teacher sharing the space. Whilst it is still possible to identify the teacher as

‘different’ and retaining the power (s) of a teacher, there is at least the potential for pupils to negotiate their role within this classroom.

This potential is further strengthened through the process of ‘contracting’ – whereby the participants attempt to find a suitable paradigm for collaborative work. Neelands (2004: 4) outlines four key purposes for undertaking such an endeavour.

An elected context	Theatre is by choice. It is bracketed off from ‘daily life’. It is a mode of live experience that is special and different from our everyday experience. The ‘choice’ is often formalised by the spatial and temporal separation of theatre from life, so that performances are advertised to occur at a certain time within a designated performance space.
Transformation of self, time and place	Within the ‘elected context’ there is the expectation that a ‘virtual present’ or ‘imagined world’, which is representative of an ‘absent’ or ‘other reality’, will be enacted through the symbolic transformation of presence, time and space. The performance space, the experience of time and the actors all become something different for the duration of the performance.
Social and aesthetic rules/ frame	Theatre is a rule – bound activity. Certain rules are ‘perpetual’- there must be a choice as to whether an event is experienced as theatre, for instance. Others are tied to particular paradigms, the rules and conventions of a particular form or period of theatre. These rules relate both to the art of theatre and also to the terms of the social encounter that is theatre; being silent or joining in, for instance.
Actor – audience interactions	There is always a performer function (the transformed self) and an audience function (reacting and responding to the performers actions). In some forms of theatre these functions are clearly separated – the

	audience comes to communicate with actors. In others, the separation is less defined- a group come together to communicate as actors and as audience. Whatever form theatre takes, there must be communication between performer and audience.

In each of the four areas of 'contracting', the pupils have equal responsibility for the creation and maintenance of the context. This collective responsibility prepares the space for renegotiation of role and identities and does so in such a way that the individual is protected by the agreement of the group. This exemplifies the argument of the primacy of the social in the shaping of the individual. It also attests to the understanding of the space of authoring in the landscape of the social world discussed by Holland et al (1998) and Vygotsky's understanding of creativity. This may be the only opportunity pupils have to participate in a genuinely dialogic pedagogic process during their time at school. As such, the pupil's role and identity becomes that of 'citizen' within a potentially democratic classroom. These negotiations occur prior to any 'drama' taking place, but are a social necessity in order to establish the explicit and tacit understandings for those who will participate. Delpit (1995: 24) in 'Other People's Children' identified five aspects of this 'culture' of power and stated, "The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power.'" In a traditional classroom, this may reflect the power that the teacher has over the pupils, in the role of a position of responsibility and dominance.

> 'If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier.' Delpit (1995: 24)

In the drama lesson, the acquisition of power becomes possible as the participants become 'players' in which the rules are made explicit (through the sharing and distribution of influence). The culture of power through 'drama' is that it enables existing social orders to be re-examined and negotiated through the lenses of multiple perspectives. Through participation or as a spectator, traditional hegemonic structure is disrupted and may be permanently transformed. According to Leland and Harste:

> A change or reframing of an old perception occurs as students are able to arrange or alternate previous assumptions. The imagination works as a stage to play out our roles and juxtapose ideas giving us the ability to see the other side, to weigh alternatives, and use what some refer to as intuition. (Leland and Harste,1994:71)

Dorothy Heathcote provides insights into how pupils might have the opportunity to experience 'transformation' through engagement and participation within a drama lesson. It is possible to identify aspects of her work that can be aligned with the theories and beliefs of Vygotsky relating to how children learn. In 'Contexts for Active Learning' (2000) Heathcote proposes four theoretical models, one of which (at least) forms the framework for the exploration of transformative role (s), transitionary identities and empowerment.

Drama used to explore people, their behaviour, their circumstances, their responses to events which affect them…..around this 'pure' form there have developed a network of other forms of exploring people and events invented by a variety of teachers to serve their own interests and beliefs…. (Heathcote, in Davies; 2013;3)

The following brief example is drawn from a lesson in a large secondary school in the British Midlands. The city is the second largest in England with a proud history in manufacturing and an ethnically diverse population. In the school in which this event took place there are significantly more boys than girls, primarily because there is a girls' school in the locality. The numbers eligible for free school meals (FSM) is well above the national average because the school is located in an area of social and economic disadvantage. Most students are of White British origin. The event is selected in order to provide an indication of how pupils are able to assume the position of authority, with power and status through interaction with 'Teacher in Role' (TIR).

To set the scene, the Teacher assumes the role of a young refugee whose son is unwilling to speak. Her attempts to settle peacefully in the local community are thwarted by the sustained attack on her and her family home. The dramatic pretext is

identified as a bucket, cloth and cleaning spray. Prior to the ‘start’ of the drama, the pupils share through discussion and analysis of the ‘symbols’ (props), what they believe may happen in the following dramatic moment.

The TIR as the refugee enters the dramatic space, collects the bucket and cloth and begins to scrub the wall which is covered with abusive graffiti. Turning directly to the audience she speaks:

“Why do you do this to me?”

It is at this point that the pupils are able to enter the drama – in a role(s) suggested and negotiated through the group. By assuming a role in the moment of fiction, the participants are able to explore possible responses, in a way that protects them from the restraints of reality and ‘self’. This enables individuals to voice thoughts, fears and concerns through the lens of ‘role’, which in turn, reflects the everyday reality of life. The teacher poses the following question to the group: ‘Who might witness this moment?’. Individuals respond and then take on the role of the person they volunteered. Examples could include neighbours, police, postal delivery person.

The child (as in role of neighbour) may offer tea and sympathy, exploring ways in which they may help. Alternatively, the role of the perpetrator may be presented. Through the protection of ‘role’ it is possible to examine ambiguities and conflicting moralities, to re-examine what these might mean in our shared reality. As Bolton (1998: 178) states ‘Heathcote’s assumptions underlying her drama praxis were, ….that participants engage with making meanings and those meanings relate to a human struggle.’ This engagement has transformative potential.

Underpinning Heathcote’s work are assumptions about the nature of learning which echo those who have been influenced by Vygotsky as outlined recently by Davis (2013). Learning involves the mutual shaping of person and setting and in schools the active role of teachers and peers in the social co-construction of solutions to problems using the tools and signs that are made available. In the arts these tools can activate the imagination and crystallise belief. The arts utilise form and structure to express ideas and emotions.

Here lies the importance of the potential of drama for (creative) learning and working with imagination(s). This rests on an understanding of the importance of both external human activity and internal interactions (and reflection) for learning. Drama whether it be scripted or improvised, is a microcosm of events that reflect events and possible events in the real world. As such, participation in the drama provides opportunities for pupils to challenge or subvert the identities they normally assume (willingly or not). This is both emancipatory and provides temporary relief from the limited power that pupils hold within the socio-cultural relationships in the school. Drama offers the possibility for the construction of 'interrupts' in the ongoing flow of life in school. The refiguring of the landscape and the transformation of identity may result. This may entail voluntary or involuntary participation in trajectories that lead to contestation of the identities, donated through the ways in which processes of categorisation operate within institutions (e.g. schooling).

The power structures evidenced in the traditional hierarchies of schooling may be reviewed, including those between the pupils themselves. During a drama lesson, pupils are able to observe each other and model alternatives for interpretation. As well as Heathcotian style process drama, other dramatic forms such as Boal's Forum Theatre (2000) offer opportunities for disrupting traditional school hierarchies and practices. 'Forum Theatre' features the sharing of a play or scene, usually indicating some kind of oppression, which is shown twice. Participants are allowed to interrupt, and exchange places with one of the oppressed characters. The intention is that they show how the situation may be changed to enable a different outcome. The activity may involve the exploration of several different alternatives. The remaining participants stay in character and improvise their responses. A facilitator enables communication between the players and the audience. This strategy subverts and restructures traditional relationships with the between actors and audiences. It enables participants to develop, and reflect on courses of action which could be applicable to their everyday lives. This may promote the development of alternatives to established identities and newly shared understandings. This blurring of the boundaries between actor and spectator, immediately creating the opportunity for dialogue and interaction in both assumed and given identities.

This is evident in the development, sharing and exploration of participants' opinion, thoughts, feelings and values in the drama lesson. Through the lens or voice of the 'role' divergent or conflicting modes can be resolved or sustained. Importantly, the opportunity to 're-play' the moment can serve to find alternative resolutions – in which new identities may be created. This may well be evidenced in the dialogue and discussions pre and post the moment in which the 'drama' occurs. During the exchange of dialogue, to what extent is the participant able to create and develop the role or identity is dependent on how capable of using the tools the individual is. An example of this could be where by a view that is contradictory to that held by the individual is shared through the lens of the role. Through negotiation and use of drama strategies, pupils are empowered to structure imagination so that their world (s) become meaningful in a shared reality. As O'Neill emphasises;

> It is imagination that allows both teacher and students to devise alternative modes of action, alternative projects and solutions, and imagination is at the heart of this complex way of thinking. (O'Neill in Heathcote and Bolton 1995; viii)

Transformation and social organisation

Drama can provide a situation for the development of alternative ways of thinking and feeling about the world and one's position within it. Through the careful structuring of social encounters the teacher can help young people to do the kind of 'identity work', which is absent from many other curriculum settings.

To requote Holland et al (1998)

> Cultural worlds[i] are populated by familiar social types and even identifiable persons, not simply differentiated by some abstract division of labour. The identities we gain within figured worlds are thus specifically historical developments, grown through continued participation in the positions defined by the social organization of those world's activity (Holland et al., 1998, p. 41)

We argue that drama provides the opportunity for a form of social intervention that can help to subvert some of "positions defined by the social organization" and offer

the possibility of a form of learning which enables them to experience a change in subject position and to reflect on that change. They are learning to see familiar landscapes from new positions. This is made possible through moments of collective creativity which sow the seeds of personal change. They bring personal histories into new settings and have the opportunity of standing outside familiar trajectories in order to contemplate new realities. As Vygotsky and Bakhtin remind us, learning of this kind involves the mutual shaping of person and place in the world. In one sense Vygostky saw life as progression through an ongoing series of dramatic encounters in which collisions between person and situation and their dialectical resolution were the very engine of existence. If education is supposed to prepare young people for later life then drama lessons are a most important way of understanding the nature of experience that lies ahead. They stand in stark contrast to the predeliction for control and 'on-task' behaviour, where the task is reading or writing (as in Duffield, 1998), that so many low SES young people encounter, perhaps especially when they have entered the pedagogic world of 'being a FSM' pupil.

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