MAKING MEANING THROUGH MOVEMENT:
A THEATRE PEDAGOGY FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING
IN REFUGEE YOUTH SETTLEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This research proposes an extension to the English language learning (ELL) classroom of refugee youth by combining the embodied techniques of theatre pedagogue Jacques Lecoq and the learning strategies of educational theorist Lev Vygotsky. Drawing from the movement of everyday human activity, Lecoq observed the body as a storehouse of knowledge that informs the mind and shapes individuation. Vygotsky revolutionized the psychological study of human cognition through his notions of sign and symbol systems in the context of their socio-historical development. The thesis outlines a comprehensive approach to language learning for refugee youth founded on Lecoq's theatre training and supported by Vygotsky's scientific analyses. Locating language meaning through an exploration of the body fosters self-reliance through self-reflective exercises which support the unique capabilities of each student. This approach is tailored to reach diverse learning needs common to ELL classrooms, while empowering refugee youth in their process of Canadian identify formation.

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It would be a great oversight to not acknowledge Jacques Lecoq. My time at his École Internationale du Theatre (1990-1992) was quite simply a life altering experience. I had the deep good fortune to be a student at the School under his tutelage. He taught me how to see, hear, and feel the world beyond the cognitive and the spoken. He taught us international students to draw and up-hold the individual cross-cultural resources of who we were and what we could contribute vis à vis new creative works for the theatre. His relentless drive for truth and purity fully prepared me to rise to the challenge of all artistic opportunities as both a performer and collaborative creator. The amount of knowledge packed into the School's two year program has never ceased to uncover pedagogical gems in *la richesse* of everyday living.

Last but certainly not least, I give thanks to my parents, immigrant Italians who arrived in Canada in 1956. They learned to integrate and speak the English language in order to survive, in order to prosper. In their war-torn Abruzzian village of the 1930's they received the equivalent of elementary school education. My Mamma, a traditional woman perplexed by my ambitious drive and tenacity has always in her own way been supportive of all my endeavors, untraditional as they have been. Truly this degree is for my Papa who passed in 1995. He always encouraged me to pursue higher learning, to get as he would say 'the piece of paper'. An intuitively smart man he never had the option of continuing his school education. *Questo e per te Papa.*

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Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

School Culture

The socially dynamic foreign-language classroom fittingly situates the double meaning of culture in schooling. The word culture connotes two fields of reference: the first speaks "to the arts and higher learning…the second…is much more holistic and inclusive. It adopts a more anthropological approach: life-ways, patterned events, and belief systems all understood as part of culture" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, 10). It is in this socially diverse milieu that I propose the integration of a sensorial-kinaesthetic theatre based application to English language learning (ELL). As an added component to standard curricula, the focus of this theatre-pedagogy impacts those particular **refugee youth** who have shown significant gaps in their education (resulting in larger 'catch up' needs) therefore requiring more intense support for a longer period of time (Ministry of Education, 2007, 13)[1].

Considerable re-evaluation of English language learning in recent years has led to a broadening of linguistic curricula, giving rise to new models for language and literacy development (John-Steiner, Panofsky, Smith, 1994,1). This is specifically due to settlement observations taken from anthropological and psychological research demonstrating the needs and demands of culturally diverse newcomer families settling in Canada whose children are either unschooled or unfamiliar with English language and literacy. Ontario secondary schools accommodate students who speak more than 100 different languages and within this demography there are new learners who have not arrived voluntarily, have not navigated a planned immigration process, often suffer

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[1] As recognized by the 2007 Ministry of Education revised Ontario curriculum for English as a second language (ESL) and English Literary Development (ELD).

traumatic experiences of family separation, repercussions of living in transit – sometimes

on the move for years at a time, where quite simply they may or may not have had access

to formal education in their homeland or in humanitarian aid camps during potential

displacement (5). Essentially, this proposed making meaning through movement program

for English language learning targets refugee youth who have been assessed and placed at

the English Learning Development (ELD) or Literacy Enrichment Academic Program

(LEAP) levels (i.e. pre- ESL A/B class). With an increase of linguistic and cultural

diversity in our classrooms, settlement complexities that accompany the needs of these

students are practically guaranteed. For those who arrive from countries where education

was not an option, the learning curve can be especially substantial. This thesis looks to

shed light on the intricacies that youth with limited prior learning confront not only in the

acquisition of new language and adoption of new culture, but those they simultaneously

face vis-à-vis the realities of instruction and curriculum content.

Immigrant settlement today can no longer sustain the same structural sensibilities

as say those that existed in my father's time of the 1950s, when Western European

labourers were all but called to help in the construction of this country (Hall, 2001, 5;

Iacovetta, 1992, 65). In 2007, Citizenship Immigration Canada registered the settlement

of 236,758 new permanent residents[2] (with children) who had neither French nor English

language ability in all Atlantic, Prairie Provinces, Quebec, Ontario, the Yukon, the

Northwest Territories, Nunavut inclusive (2009). Integrating this reality with continent,

country, culture, class, language, religion comes no shortage of differences that catalogue

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[2] In Ontario, immigrant claimants from source countries of Africa and the Middle East, Asia and Pacific, South and Central America collectively capped 70% of the population, outweighing the number of U.S., U.K., and Europeans (30%) claimants in 2007. Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *About Us*. Date Modified: 2008-03-30.

us as human beings -- including issues of race and class that exist within these

diversities[3]. Settling in the new life space of today's Canadian "cultural capital" presents

much larger adjustment repercussions in direct proportion to the statistical demographic

of peoples seeking shelter in this country (Bourdieu, 1993). Investing deeper into the

present assimilation paradigm involves a renegotiation of the diasporic framework as we

know it My thesis proposes a cultural awareness re-imagining, which begins with our

most influenced, receptive, teachable young people.

> Culture is not, as a matter of sober fact, a "given" at all…the personality definitions
> and potentials must never for a moment be lost sight of, and which are destined
> from the very beginning to interpret, evaluate and modify every culture pattern,
> sub-pattern, or assemblage of patterns that it will ever be influenced by, everything
> changes. Culture is then not something given but something to be gradually and
> gropingly discovered. We then see at once that element of culture that comes well
> within the horizons of awareness of one individual are entirely absent in another
> individual's landscape (Darnell, Irvine and Handler 1999, 310).

Canada as a place of confrontation and daily negotiation with multifarious "visual

culture"[4] all but cultivates a "one" and an "other" identity construction (Peeren and

Horstkotte, 2007, 11; Hastings, Adi and Manning, 2004, 291-311). In a theoretical

capacity, identity and difference are not mutually opposed i.e., an "irrefutable and

undeniable power of racial construction and culture" (Desai, 2001, 241-243). Canada

imagines itself as a place where social difference in identity formation is encouraged.

Yet, is it language identity that unites or divides the diversity[5] of our co-existing national

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[3] "…we love race, and we love identities to which it has given birth. The argument in the simplest form will be that we love race – we love identity – because we don't love class. We love thinking that the differences that divide us are not the differences between those of us who have money and those of us who are black and those of us who are white or Asian or Latino…A world where some of us don't have money is a world where the differences between us present a problem: the need to get rid of inequality or to justify it." Walter Benn Michaels, *The Trouble with Diversity: How We Learned to Love Identity and Ignore Inequality*, 2006, 6.

4 "Visual culture works towards the social theory of visuality, focusing on questions of what is made visible, who sees what, how seeing, knowing and (class) power are interrelated". Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, Culture and Meaning in the Museum in *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, 2000, 14.

5 "Diversity is a term whose meaning varies with the background, concerns, theoretical framework, and context in which it is discussed…For the purposes of this chapter, it means recognition of variation among people related to their cultural heritages, racial and ethnic identities, and gender and class experiences." Arvizu, S.F. *Building Bridges for the Future: Anthropolgical Contributions to Diversity and Classroom Practices*. In Cultural Diversity in Schools: From Rhetoric to Practice, 1994, 76.

individual states? David Howes (2005) writes on consciousness as feeling in the body. He introduces the notion that:

> The limitations of language are unavoidable so long as language is the medium of communication. What it is possible to avoid however, is the expansion of language into a structural model that dictates all cultural and personal experience and expression (4).

In the language learning classroom, as in regular classrooms, it is not uncommon to experience disruptive behaviour, cultural and racial name-calling, anger, retaliatory aggressive acts (including passive withdrawal of participation) that can contribute to (self) segregation between cultural and ethnic groups (DeVillar and Faltis, 1994, 8). This provides an unfortunate disadvantage to the young language learner as it greatly impedes the premise of new language learning where collectivity is essential for communication, integration and cooperation (Sparling,1994). There is no shortage of encounters with the complex ways in which racial, ethnic, and language identities find expression in daily life and in the ELL classroom (James, 2001, 2). This research seeks to assist newly arrived youth to succeed and excel in the rebuilding of their lives, by nurturing who they are, through an awareness of their subjectivities. The proposed theatre pedagogy program for English language learning in refugee youth settlement is designed to help diminish the experience of a trajectory toward subjective morphing into merely a subject position they feel they need to occupy in order to 'fit in' (Lacroix, 2004, 156).

> When a person learns another language, something is "undergone." We "undergo" when we allow our encounters to modify our established conceptions. When we undergo experience, we ultimately have to change ourselves and our way of looking at the world. This is what true learning is – a modification of our very selves (Wagner, 2002, 5).

The Refugee Student

Speaking does not of itself constitute communication and the learning of a

language does not a citizen make (Celce-Murcia 1991; Wagner, 2002). Therefore

language learning merits a deeper look into the construction of citizen identities

underlying this study and its ultimate 'other' -- referred to as the refugee (Nyers, 2006).

The label 'refugee' carries with it a stigma of emptiness, transience, helplessness. A

'refugee' exists counter to that of the present, permanent, authoritative citizen (24).

Clearly, the reasons behind refugee integration issues differ from those concerning other

immigrations. Their admittance into Canada (e.g., fleeing of persecution) and the life

circumstances surrounding their migration is likely to be more traumatic than that of

voluntary immigrants (Yu, Ouellet, Warmington, 2007, 18). Decades ago so-called

refugees were welcomed as culturally similar 'others' who could fulfill labour needs;

they arrived in manageable numbers, and reinforced ideological or strategic objectives

(UNHCR, 2006, 1). When the numbers began to exceed singular identities, the status

expanded to account for multiplicities of extraordinarily large and varied categories to

include: "Charter refugee, political refugee, environmental refugee, nonstatus refugee,

internally displaced person, asylum seeker, émigré, oustee, deportee, relocee, involuntary

displaced person, involuntary resettled person, forced migrant, involuntary migrant and

so on", and they became the 'problem' in need of a 'solution'

(Nyers, 2006, 14).

> In the last two decades especially, the flow of refugees moving over the surface of
> the globe, now thought to number about 15 million, has focused attention on
> cultures everywhere, forcing each country to address its own questions of identity
> and definition (Marranca and Dasgupta 1991, 11).

> The process of becoming a refugee claimant and the social construct of refugee

itself continues to perpetuate differences which in turn perpetuates social and political

hierarchies (Lacroix, 2004, xv; Nyers, 2006, xvii). In a process which maintains

"identity-at-a-distance" the entrenched question is: "what do we do about them?"

(Silverman, 1996,10). The subsequent question becomes: How do we view the person

behind their immigration status? It has been my personal experience however that the

newly arrived youth undergoing an immigration procedure of 'refugee' status does not

identify with this label. For many, it is considered procedural/bureaucratic tape which

they feel inclined to deny or keep secret. They do seem to accept the more open or

competent sounding 'newcomer' which is not always connected to the controversy

surrounding refugees' plight in the lexicon of global migration. Settlement research has

gone to great lengths to statistically register the 52% of resettled refugees under the age

of twenty-two, but little follow-up has been undertaken to help understand what happens

to refugee youth once they are resettled (Presse and Thomson, 2007, 51).

To better understand the repercussive factors overshadowing uprooted refugee

youth, one can look at the trickle down effect of parents and caregivers. With age and the

history of an 'old' life comes a larger rupture -- a more daunting beginning to create

which is often equated to that of a child being born[6] and the psychological complexities

that go with a returning to 'infancy' at the age of 35 or 40 (Lacroix, 2004, 156-7). This

undeniably affects the offspring wearing away at who they were, who they are, and who

they will become (Lacroix, 2004, 147).

> It seems to me that we sometimes make the mistake of seeing refugees as
> 'supermen' and 'superwomen'. We expect them to resettle anywhere...it is not fair

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[6] In Marie Lacroix's research paper on Canadian Refugee Policy and the Social Construction of the Refugee Claimant Subjectivity: Understanding Refugeeness, she interviews 5 refugee claimants who use the image of the umbilical cord being cut in order to begin a new life – associating being born to their status as refugee needing "to be carried and then learn to walk, first on hands and knees, and then on two legs", 2004, 156.

to place expectations on refugees we would not be able to hold for ourselves"
(Rose, 1986, 102).

Forced to become something they have not chosen,[7] the refugee quickly comes to understand that cultural competency is of dire necessity, and not just for the obvious reasons of employment and social benefits, but also to alleviate isolation and barriers that limit participation in everyday life. It is at this axis of consciousness where a process for identity construction begins as refugees recast the terms of their identities (Nyers, 2006, xv).

> Too often we mistakenly blame the refugees for not fitting into, or prospering according to a traditional model we have developed, when we in fact the model, or maybe numerous models, are not addressing the real problems themselves (Rose, 1986, 45).

Mindful regard of refugees' self-respect and dignity are often tied to their cultural beliefs, and cultural pride; they need time to patiently understand and assess the transition period. However, flexibility in learning resources (emphasizing new strategies for life learning as well as literacy curriculum structures); time to stimulate and cultivate the myriad of needs and situations that foster vibrant new Canadians are all qualities not necessarily built into the settlement system. Developing practices of resettlement and coexistence rely on several factors. Nationality and culture of origin are important. Persons in the middle class or in professions generally adjust better than others. The young more often than not adapt much faster than the old (Smyser, 1987, 38). Enabling youth prepares them to be vital conduits to their family's integration:

> ...for students to invest their sense of self, their identity, in acquiring their new language and participating actively in their new culture, they must experience

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[7] "...they did not chose to leave their comfortable lives, to leave their families, to come to Canada, to be underemployed, unemployed or to remain on welfare. Throughout the process of becoming a refugee many things are imposed upon them, from the route they take to leave to the choices of their lawyers." Marie Lacroix, *Canadian Refugee Policy and the Social Construction of the Refugee Claimant Subjectivity: Understanding Refugeeness*, 2004, 155.

positive and affirming interactions with members of that culture (Schecter and Cummins, 2003, 11).

Therefore how can Canada's revered system for settlement, now accepting more and more refugees from the Global South and not from Eastern Europe, better integrate a large group of persons? What strategies will help bridge the divide for those who have undergone such traumatic change in their lives to help them adjust to the new environment? In "Difficult Knowledge and Intimate Encounters" (2007), Alice Pitt and Deborah Britzman highlight the prospect of encountering the self through the otherness of knowledge. New knowledge gained in the new country, much like social traumas, can "…appear disturbingly strange or inconceivable to the self, bringing oneself up against the limits of what one is willing and capable of understanding" (quoted in Bonnell and Simon, 2007, 68). This articulately captures the basis for my research question: could the school system in working to understand the shared human commonalities of youth refugees, encounter new 'other' meaningful dimensions as it prepares the prospective Canadian 'self' through the knowledge of refugee "otherness"? Here we could explore how the other is more like me than I expected or that I might find myself to be other, even to myself (Peeren and Horstkotte, 2007, 10). Through a wider lens, my research summons reflection of Canada's present day practices of resettlement and coexistence.

> But if coexistence with other humans means sharing the same world, this coexistence is established by what already exists. The perception of the other, of the space and the interactions between myself and the other, are ruled over by a single reality worked out before a subject comes into it, and this reality is imagined to be the same for all. Coexisting then presupposes belonging to a same world that regulates relations with oneself, with the other, with the environment. Being with the other in that case precludes that this other belongs to a different world, that he, or she, not share our own world (Irigaray, 2008, 67).

In regard to what unites and divides us as people, culture articulates our identities

"in the tension it produces between inherited and shared customs and traditions, on the one hand, and the restless striving for new and distinguishing forms of individuality, on the other" (Bennett 2006, 52). Exposing the difficulties of difference, this proposed program for making meaning through movement as an addition to the English language classroom is designed to addresses social constructs that inadvertently set-up difference as the 'Other'.

Thesis outline

This study reviews the works of theatre pedagogue Jacques Lecoq and educational theorist Lev Vygotsky. The abundant availability of cross-disciplinary resources demonstrates how profoundly their pioneering bodies of work have impacted contemporary theatre practice and teaching strategies respectively. The intent of bringing together these two sources is to create a perspective that might better inform how English language learning (ELL) classrooms might sustain an alternative movement based application to the learning of new language. To compliment my work I interviewed two key informants in the field of language and literacy; one an ELL educator actively teaching at a high school in a major metropolitan area of a large school board; the other a well known and highly regarded scholar in the areas of second language acquisition, bilingualism, and language immersion. My interview data provided pertinent information vis-à-vis the logistics of implementing a kinaesthetic dimension to the current concepts and concerns in Ministry regulated curricula. To further triangulate my approach I draw from my work as a theatre educator with the *Ontario Arts Council's* (OAC) "Artist-In-Education" programs. I have twenty years experience in the theatre community working as professional actor (under the auspices of the Canadian Actor's Equity Association,

Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists, Union des Artistes). Most

important to this program is my experience as an alumna of the Paris, France based

Jacques Lecoq's *Ecole Internationale de Theatre* (1990-1992) and subsequent six years

(1993-1999) performing with the Lecoq style repertory company, *Theatre de la*

Jacquerie also based in Paris. Socio-historically, Lev Vygotsky would probably insist

that my beginnings as a child of immigrant parents, living with two feet in two languages

and two respective cultures is likely a profound source of inspiration for my research.

Making meaning through movement

Pooling together the three areas of my research study (theatre, refugee study, and

education), I'm proposing an investigation that allows for an embodied understanding of

students' new language learning experiences using Lecoq's physical theatre exercises,

and reinforced by Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of external intermediation to internal

processing for subjective development. The aim of my research is to develop a viable

extension to the socio-cultural competence strand of course requirements that help

mediate the basic human needs of culture transitioning to better situate refugee youth for

learning in Canada (Ministry of Education, 2007, 20). Self-reflective exercises of actor's

theatre training integrated into schooling can assist in bridging young people's homeland

identity by upholding the foundation from which they might confidently narrate their

unique stories, journey, and subsequent development toward becoming Canadian citizens

(Yaman Ntelioglou, 2006; Brinkler-Gabler, 1995, 3). My research proposes an expansion

to the traditional quadrants of listening, reading, writing and media literacy required by

Ministry approved curricula by integrating skills that equip newly arrived youth with an

embodied[8] alternative to assist them in their process of settlement. The idea is to

empower each student to construct their identity through physicality and bodily

movement to maintain or reclaim themselves in the foreignness of the English language

classroom. Extending the influential socio-cultural space of the language classroom

therefore fosters a place in the new environment in which to come to terms with the self.

Locating language meaning through an exploration of the body in words, effectively

captures the simultaneity of the adolescent refugee's maturation process with that of their

Canadian identify formation. In *Identity:Community, Culture, Difference*, Stuart Hall

(1990) writes:

> Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of
> thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural
> practices then represent, we should think instead of identity as a 'production',
> which is never complete, always in process and always constituted within, not
> outside representation" (quote in Rutherford, 1990, 222).

My research does not look to engage a discussion on the subjectivity of

experience and appropriate classroom distance between the lived experience and that of

the experiencing subjects (Ellis and Flaherty, 1992, 3). Sociologists have long debated

emotional and cognitive orientations as competing perspectives with emphasis on a

traditional perspective of subjectivity defined as a reflection to a personal response,[9]

making such aspects of this subsequent experience very difficult to study under scientific,

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[8] TJ Csordas , *"Embodiment as a paradigm for anthropology:: Ethos"*. Embodied Learning according to TJ Csordas, is situated on the level of lived experience and not on that of discourse; embodiment is about "understanding" or "making sense" in a prereflexive or even presymbolic, but not precultural, way. TJ Csordas, *The Sacred Self: Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing,* 276. It precedes objectivation and representation and is intrinsically part of our being-in-the-world. As such it collapses the difference between subjective and objective, cognition and emotion, or mind and body.

[9]"Emotions are isolated from their social contexts. Sociologists have concentrated their efforts on micro-processes and individual emotions...Analysis of political and cultural forces that condition emotional experience across time and space is neglected. Consequently, we have little knowledge of the social distribution of subjectivity with respect to inequality and the ways that systems of subjectivity change over time." Carolyn Ellis and Michael G. Flaherty, *Investigating Subjectivity: Research on Lived Experience*, 1992.

formulaic criteria as often established in educational institutions (Ellis and Flaherty, 1992, 3). For some it cannot be denied that "coming into contact with subjects' lived experiences can make us feel uncomfortable and embarrassed" (Ellis, 1992, 23-50). By grounding this research in the teachings of Jacques Lecoq, the focus instead addresses the manner in which emotion, cognition and the presence of the living body intertwine (Boler, 1999, 109; Ellis and Flaherty, 1992, 3).

Theatre technique as an 'out-of-field' alternative approach can be used to investigate the "in-between space" that segregates the "us versus them", 'I' from 'other', insider/outsider divide (Bhabha, 1990, 4; Schecter and Cummins, 2003, 5; Graham and Yasin, 2007, 157). The objective of an embodied intervention is to destabilize the gap, in order to highlight how the " 'other' is never outside or beyond us" -- working together to draw from what unites us in being human (Brinkler-Gabler, 1995, 4-7). Identity has a place in this culturally and linguistically diverse classroom space (Lindholm, 1994, 189). Places change as do the identities associated with them. Therefore this place is not considered a point of origin, or an unmediated presence, but rather a place of situating altered identities, "a place always under contestation and never guaranteed" (Peeren and Horstkotte, 2007, 11). The main purpose behind integrating a pedagogical 'space' in English language learning curricula is to nurture, direct, and strengthen budding identities to bloom and reveal what is hidden within (Bradby, 2006, 9). In the context of the new school environment and the relative safety of the English language classroom, this place becomes the space where procedures for new identity negotiation can begin (Schecter and Cummins, 2003,14). Drawing from Lecoq's physical theatre exercises, making meaning through movement proposes a shift in the conventional learning focus for minority

students to assist in the discovery of their own subjectivity, experience and identity vis-à-vis language. Including the alternative resources that theatre provides, broadens perspectives from which to re-prioritize and re-conceptualize refugee youths' place and purpose in relation to their self/social adjustment needs prompted by the new social cultural knowledge (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007, 362).

American anthropologist Edward Sapir wrote "all culture starts from the needs of a common humanity" (quote in Darnell, Irvine, and Handler, 1999, 310). Adjusting to societal demands of the new host culture is also an opportunity to discover what better understanding refugees have of their own culture which inevitably follows them, and ultimately superimposes on the Canadian backdrop. A cultural adaptation process provides opportunities to deeply reflect on the cultural self unlike the way one might in one's country of origin. Enhancing the ELL classroom with alternative, embodied meaning making opens the possibility for investigating new social constructions that activate new thought and help better foster the learning and development potential of vibrant, young refugees as capable new Canadians (Kozulin, 1986, xxiv; Pollock, 2007, 29; Smith in John-Steiner, Panofsky, Smith, 1994, 35).

The proceeding chapters include individual sections on the relevant theories of Jacques Lecoq and Lev Vygotsky. Chapter Four draws together their respective bodies of work toward the building of a practical movement-based program that contributes hands-on, active instruction offering supplementary skills that can work in tandem with existing English language learning modules. Chapter Five documents two field study interviews conducted, one with a high school English language educator, the other with a leading academic in second language and literacy development. The purpose of the

interviews was to gather practical knowledge of present systems, and practices to compare and contrast what these specific participants know through their respective working experiences. Finally, this thesis considers the implications of a theatre pedagogy for English language learning in refugee youth settlement, and draws conclusions which suggest future directions for further development of a movement based pedagogical approach to ELL.

Figure 1

FIVE AREAS OF JACQUES LECOQ'S THEATRE TRAINING

- **SPACE** (l'espace)

- **MOVEMENT** (mime - imitation)

- **NEUTRAL MASK** (masque neutre)

  There are three masks:
    The one we think we are,
    The one we really are,
    And the one we have in common.
  (Jacques Lecoq)

- **SENSORY/EMOTION** (les sensations/grandes émotions)

- **THE BODY OF WORDS**

  GESTURE (les movements du corps)
  PANTOMIME (silence avant la parole)
  GROMMELER/GIBBERISH (presque la parole)

Chapter Two: JACQUES LECOQ

SILENCE BEFORE WORDS

There are five essential areas of Jacques Lecoq's theatre training (Figure 1) central to this study of a sensorial-kinesthetic component to the English language learning curriculum. Like a funnel they begin in the broadest sense of the space we all share and inhabit. It follows through various exercises of movement, neutral mask, sensory emotion, and silent expression i.e. pre-words or "body of words" of gesture, pantomime, and a technique based on human vocal sounds called *grommeler* or gibberish (Lecoq, 2000, 49). I would like to take this opportunity to clarify what may appear evident, but could possibly lead to misunderstandings; these Lecoq-based alternative exercises for ELL are in no way used for performance or the making of theatrical actors. As an alumnus (1990 – 1992), my experience of the school was of a place of learning, play, and creation – drawing observations from the everyday phenomena of life. Monsieur Lecoq taught us how to reflect what we saw, what we felt, to inform who we were through the miming body. Each year the Lecoq School attracts an increasing number of students from up to 80 countries which in itself is an education on cultural exchange and cross-fertilization. This unique blend of internationalism contributes its own powerful resonance to Lecoq's teachings. The aim he had, and that the school continues to uphold, is for the students to learn how to generate performance languages which emphasize the unique physical playing of each actor. His specific intention, through teaching the art of creation, was to bear fruit which would eventually separate from the tree (Lecoq, 2000, 18). In outling the following central areas of Lecoq's techniques, I would like to add that I have modified versions of their origins (i.e. diluted the performative aspect of exercise

intent to make them applicable for teen refugee development and learning). I base my interpretive mediation of Lecoq's work on my experiences of working with teens and newcomers, bearing in mind political factors for reception within high school curricula.

ON JACQUES LECOQ (1921-1999)

Jacques Lecoq's work was founded on the notion that "the body knows things about which the mind is ignorant" (Lecoq 2000, 9). As fate would have it, he began in the human sciences as a physiotherapist observing corporeal movements in and out of activity. He recalled witnessing one particular disabled patient affected by paralysis, who determinately organized to re-learn new function of re-habilitated movement. Curiosity about this loss of body motion and subsequent recreation of it, Lecoq investigated how and why kinesthetic resonance relates to the more intimate movement of human emotion. This eventually became the foundation of his research for artistic expression. He believed that "gesture was the deposit of an emotion[10]", and that "physical circuits" play a key role in the physiology, musculature, and individual body memory of the actor (Murray, 2003, 54). Memory in this sense does not refer to the psychology of personal histories, but more so as it applies to the body as storehouse of experiential knowledge which triggers the imagination to stimulate artistic creation. Lecoq discovered that by implanting new physical circuits, new movement patterns could be shaped and integrated. In the context of theatre, the relationship between movement and memory can act as conduit for shaping the actor's bodily disposition in the world for the stage (54).

In the 1950's this was considered a fairly unique approach to theatre training, thus acquiring nebulous assessments with descriptors such as: "*physical theatre, movement*

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[10] A term roughly translated from the French *le depot*, there is no precise equivalent for this in the English language.

theatre, body-based theatre, visual performance" and even *"modern mime"* broadly used to categorize the work (Murray, 2003, 2-3 original italics). Grounded in provocative corporeal exploration, the Lecoq method is not so much a formula or design to follow, as it is a working method of which he explained: "what students do with it is up to them" (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, 4). Essentially this implies that each individual who trains at the school imbues their own "nature of self", be it idiosyncratic, genetic, and/or culturally formed (11). His process of examining self through bodies in space hinges on intuitiveness, hence Lecoq strategically integrated intuition as a fundamental element into his teaching. He believed intuition empowers the student actor to discover their own style rather than imposing one upon them (Bradby, 2006, xii). His analyses observe that the geometry of the physical body's movement in space has a direct correlation to human behavior and emotion. The heightening of sensory awareness and of movement frame a discovery of self in terms of the individual's grasp of real life situations in relation to material contexts encountered of the external world (Lecoq, 2000, 19). By insisting on the physical realities of each situation, Lecoq's methodology completely bypasses the psychological (Bradby, 2006, xv).

> The self that thinks and acts needs firstly to retire from the constructions put upon it by the language of others and then to create itself through tactile exploration, observation and discovery, and finally in the company of other similarly questing selves (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, 12).

The philosophy of *L'Ecole International de Theatre Jacques Lecoq*, is that when stripped away from barriers in the forms of the spoken word, culture, class, customs, gender and so forth, we focus and identify basic shared human similarities. This is best exemplified in Lecoq's first year curriculum which focuses heavily on a "process of demystification" where students "are invited to forget all the *enculturated* habits of

socialized movement" (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, 27). This new beginning, or

return to zero, establishes a unified oneness where students share and build from "a state

of non-knowing, a state of openness and availability for (the) rediscovery"[11]. This is not

to be confused with forgetting or erasing of one's prior knowledge. Instead the training

pursues a theatre of 'human nature' where awakening expression through corporeal forms

develops visual literacy to intentionally transcend the limits of spoken language (Storr,

2006, 23). Unpacking social and cultural practices reflected and etched on our bodies

begins an awareness of self in relation to other, demonstrating where are we alike, and

how we differ (Powell, 2007, 1084).

SPACE (l'espace)

> the word "space" lost its strictly geometrical meaning, it has acquired and been
> accompanied by numerous adjectives or nouns that defined its "new" use and
> attributes. Mental space, ideological space, literary space, the space of the
> imagination, the space of dreams, utopian space, imaginary space, technological
> space, cultural space...social space...(Hanawalt and Kobialka, 2000)

> Space speaks. People define space. Space defines people in it. Behaviour and

space are mutually dependant. There are in-between spaces; bodied spaces; anthropologic

spaces. Life space. (Ardener, 1981). Quite simply space is "a priori criterion" providing

dual functions for the theatre, as it is both in space that a theatrical performance resides,

while simultaneously representing a 'concept of' space, in the space of imagination

(Hanawalt and Kobialka, 2000; Ardener, 1981, 167). In this infinitude of space the

development of concepts refer beyond what the senses can verify. Therefore space

becomes very difficult to talk about, but easy to demonstrate; for example, for a

performer to recognize oneself in the playing space is to be aware, to be present, to take

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[11] Lecoq, quoted in Mira Felner's book *Apostles of Silence* (Fairleigh Dickinson, Associated University Presses, 1985) from "L'Ecole Jacques Lecoq", *Theatre de la Ville*, no 15, January 1972.

in, and to be responsible for the choices made within it (Johnstone, 1981, 57). Space and

social relations are intricately linked, rendering space pliant and open to interpretation

(183). Space creates place and place organizes meaning, where meaning is measured in

movements of time and the movement is either directional or circular (as in repetition)

(Tuan, 1977, 3). Introducing external constraints of time space provokes meaning and

movement, as in the constraint of silence forces one to be understood (Bradby, 2006, 72).

In the absence of speech human beings navigate and locate themselves in space through

complex visual and body languages and semiotic communications systems (Ardener,

1981).

> Social scientists do not yet possess a language adequate to the simultaneous
> occurrence of spatial form and social processes...do spatial arrangements cause
> certain social outcomes or do social processes create spatial differentiation? (Spain,
> 1992, 6)

We naturally project ourselves into the three dimensions of space (height, width

and depth) when we stand, move, and extend our limbs (Goldman, 1999, 1). We make

patterns with our use of space in a repetition of physical dimensions, restrictions,

perimeteric boundaries. The patterns exist whether we are aware of them or not and

ultimately they help us define who we are to ourselves and to others. Yet, when we stay

within certain spatial configurations "we limit our communication pathways as well as

our physical pathways" (5). The Laboratory For The Study Of Movement[12] (L.E.M.) is

adjunct to Lecoq's school, offering study of the relationship between the human body and

the constructed space in which it moves (Murray, 2003, 20). Lecoq described it as "a

laboratory devoted to research...a place of experiment and of science" (20). The evening

classes are taught by architects (one, Lecoq's very own daughter, Pascale). It is not

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[12] An acronym ranslated from the French, Laboratoire Etudes Mouvement.

mandatory to the regular daytime curriculum and typically draws in those interested in set

design, visual arts, and of course, architecture. It teaches that:

> any living space has 'dramatic possibilities' and influences the behaviour of the
> people who enter it or the characters who perform in it. A change of place modifies
> all our attitudes and behaviour, down to the pace at which we walk...Before
> constructing a habitable space, whether in real-life dramas or for those off the
> stage, it is important to work out in advance the life which will exist in the space
> (Lecoq, 2000, 155).

For these students, predominantly non-actors, much of the same focus applies; for

example, actors might study the human walk to better understand the laws of movement

the space of the body in movement the abstract study of human emotion, and of colours.

What differs in this exploration is three-dimensional material constructions using wood,

cardboard, string, clay etc. exhibiting their discoveries instead of an embodied

interpretation. Ultimately LEM is in keeping with Lecoq's pedagogy for alternative ways

of heightening body awareness towards the observations of reality (156).

> Theatre integrates bodies, objects, and space to represent an alternate reality in
> performance. Because concepts of space differ across cultures and history, the
> relationship between bodies, objects, and space cannot be assumed to be consistent
> (Hanawalt and Kobialka, 2000, 167).

As a mirror reflecting society, the performance space is not a separate entity that

merely feeds off what happens in the real world. They co-exist in reciprocity with one

another where the same essential components of space, place, objects, and time of the

lived world, are imitated in the recreated one (Frost and Yarrow, 2007, 5; Tuan, 1977, 3).

The advantage of the theatre playing space is that imaginative exploration allows

parameters, ideas, and the shape of real life space to be changed or altered under the

auspices of artistic license and suspension of disbelief (Frost and Yarrow, 2007, 5). This

offers abundant potential to what Konstantin Stanislavski termed the "magic if" which

carries the actor into imaginary circumstances in order to create and solve problems on the stage (Moore, 1974, 28). It is a strong stimulus for inner and physical actions whereby a process of self-discovery requires an enlargement of our sense of identity ('What would I do if...') in order to transfer and apply this knowledge to the identification of the character or situation in the space of the recreated play (Moore, 1974, 27; Hagen, 1973, 22).

> Learning is rarely at the level of explicit and formal instruction...in a strange part of town: unknown space stretches ahead of us. In time we know a few landmarks and the routes connecting them. Eventually what was strange town and unknown space becomes a familiar place. Abstract space, lacking significance other than strangeness, becomes concrete place, filled with meaning. Much is learned but not through formal instruction. Nearly all learning is at the subconscious level (Tuan, 1977, 200)

Meaning is examined through embodiment situated in lived experience where the body as subject of culture creates meaning through being in the world (Csordas 1994, 276). Embodiment is about understanding and making sense and the experience merges the vast abstractness of new space to create the specifics of new place, as in the cultural development and social organization of defined place within space (Csordas 1990, 10;Tuan, 1997, 4-6). Reconfiguring a modified Lecoquian framework aims to study the body as a site of knowing, perceiving, and experiencing new space, as two different though goal-oriented approaches to the making of new meaning (Powell, 2007,1084;Van Wolputte, 2004, 257).

MOVEMENT (mouvement)

Every movement starts with an impulse to move. As obvious as this statement may appear, Jacques Lecoq believed that analysing physical action and acquiring physical awareness lead to self discovery:

the human body is not a fixed biological, anatomical or 'god-given' entity. Rather, the body carries the traces of its own history – it 'speaks' of who we are. When we look at bodies – including our own – we see more than just flesh, hair, blood, muscles and so on. We see personal biography, the masks of suffering or happiness, and the imprint of class, gender, race and all those other characteristics and dispositions that make us who we are." (Murray, 2003, 39)

Delving beyond a general analysis of the body, Lecoq condensed eleven

categories of human movement following George Hebert's 'natural method'[13]. These

specific movements represent the quintessential focus of his pedagogy. They include:

> *pulling, pushing, climbing, walking, running, jumping, lifting, carrying, attacking, defending, swimming.* These actions lay down circuits in the human body, through which emotions flow. Feelings, states and passions are expressed through gestures, attitudes and movements similar to those of physical actions (Lecoq, 2000, 71 original italics).

Honing in on muscle, breath, and weight distribution necessary for the articulation

of these motions focuses student awareness on the remarkable instinctive flow and

restraint inherent in all everyday physical movement. Stored within a repertory-like

catalogue of repetitive action live emotional imprints that make up personal experience

from which to grow and learn. The highly subjective nature of the work led Lecoq to

reject any type of precise, formalised, or codified movement techniques which he

believed ultimately lock down, stunt, and distort creative development, thereby denying

the possibility of *play* and subsequently exploration (Murray, 2003, 54 original italics).

He also had little patience for student actor's psychoanalytic reasoning behind the actions

which Lecoq felt burdened the performance of these movements. Although skilled,

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[13] In 1907 George Hebert devised a 'natural method' for marines under his command of physical education for the both the body and mind. Lecoq took from this and developed an exercise for first year curriculum known as the '20 Movements'. Students are asked to put twenty movements based from mime artist Etienne Decroux's *grammaire* (established with Jean-Louis Barrault). These were strict, comprehensive codes of movement and gesture succinctly exemplifying the above adjectives of Hebert's natural method. Now recognized as renowned mime movements, enabled the art form to attain autonomous status and authority. David Brady. *Theatre of Movement and Gesture*, 2006, 37; Franc Chamberlaon and Ralph Yarrow. *Jacques Lecoq and the British Theatre*, 2002, 44.

disciplined execution is necessary, the ultimate objective of the eleven categories lies in Lecoq's greater interest – the purity and truth behind the movement (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, 26). Striving to uncover the real nature of an action or gesture ultimately uncovered the presence and truthful purity of the self that lies within (26). In this sense, the exercises become a sort of kinesthetic rorshach evaluation without the psychological assessment.

In childhood we possess a freedom of movement that most often corresponds directly with our needs, desires or immediate state of being, e.g., anger, happiness, excitement and so forth. It is when we mature socially that we begin to adopt more conventional, acceptable forms of behaviour and body conduct that sometimes represent our identity, are formed by our identity, or quite simply indicate who we are to ourselves and others through our unique idiosyncrasies (Lecoq, 2000, 70). Essentially, the aim of Lecoq's training is to rediscover that childlike liberty through the frames of "disponibilité" and "complicité", two necessary components of his school (Murray, 2003, 70). Neither word is given full justice in their literal English translations of 'availability' and 'togetherness', respectively. *Disponibilité* in the Lecoquian sense of the word, pertains more to a "state of discovery, of openness, of freedom to receive" (Lecoq, 2000, 38). *Complicité* is used in a more dramatic tone to encourage a sort of collusion "in a spirit of shared gleeful pleasure: more camaraderie of rogues and revolutionaries, than the quiet, self-satisfied handholding of saints" (Murray, 2003, 71). As a student actor, adhering to these words in the context of the training the ultimate aim is to let go and play inviting the ultimate fear of personal risk. Putting oneself in an improvisatory situation where uncertainty, exposition and vulnerability prevail requires the individual student

strive to stretch beyond cognitive limits, often those of the self-imposed kind.

Mime

Legendary French mime artist Etienne Decroux coined the phrase "what Freud

makes us say, mime makes us do" (Brady,2006, 54). Lecoq proclaimed his was *not* a

mime school. His unrelenting dedication to an unorthodox theatre pedagogy is based on

the premise that creative language has a physical component recognized in the miming[14]

body, before it has an oral one (Aristotle, The Poetics, no.4):

> The body knows things we don't yet know. But we must not speak too soon. That's why we begin with silence to grasp better what we should say afterwards. It's essential to recover that silence which gives rise to speech (Lecoq, in Roy and Carasso, 1999).

This is not to suggest or abandon text work all together, but rather to emphasize

the actor's body as the starting point that frees one from the dominance of the

written/spoken word. Liberating language of its literal orientation enriches meaning with

qualities of additional physical and visual dimensions (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002,

34). Lecoq dismissed conventional forms of mime and clichés of the sad, silent, white

face, uni-tard clad performer wildly gesturing and grimacing to make up for the lack of

speech. Mime in its truest sense "lives in the depths of silence, where gesture does not

replace words" (Bradby, 2006, 68). To mime is to deepen the connection with hidden

meaning, to search beyond the obvious for the discovery of our individual

understandings. Lecoq illustrates:

> If I mime the sea, it is not about drawing waves in space with my hands to make it understood that it is the sea, but about grasping the various movements into my own body: feeling the most secret rhythms to make the sea come to life in me, little by little, to become the sea...I choose and transpose, my physical impressions (69).

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[14] Aristotle wrote "man is, of all human animals, the one most drawn to mime and it is through miming that he acquires all his knowledge" in David Bradby (Ed.), *Theatre of Movement and Gesture*, 4.

It is no wonder then that each mimetic interpretation is "inimitable and can resemble no other" quite simply for the fact that mime is an act of imitation, linked to personal interpretation defined in the context of our physical capabilities (69). We can only imitate that which already exists and which one recognizes, sees or hears (68). This leads to three general principles of Lecoq's methodology: primarily, to observe; secondly, to analyse; and thirdly to improvise (Rolfe,1972, 36). These principles free "mime from rigid forms of formalism, permitting it to act as the foundation of a complete dramatic training based on the (unique) body" (Rolfe, 1972, 35). By attuning to the universal[15] language of the "speaking body" (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, 68), Lecoq equips first year students with the necessary, self-generated (sensorial) tools to embark on a quest in search of their own form of creative expression.

> Mime is pre-eminently a research art; all forms of art originate in its silent depths, for everything moves, stirs, shifts, evolves, is transformed. It is in that common mimetic source that the artist prepares for his thrusts towards the different forms of expression (35).

Apart from its artistic use on a stage, we constantly mime one another and our experiences in our daily lives. An obvious example is in observing children who "mime the world in order to get to know it and to prepare themselves to live in it" (Lecoq, 2000, 22). Other manifestations include forms of imitation such as the retelling of an event or story. By internalizing certain attitudes or vocals of the given situation we interpret thereby emphasizing our recounting of it. Often imitation is not even a conscious act as

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[15] When Lecoq speaks 'universal' he refers to theatre's 'universal human needs', 'universal laws', 'universal language', he is acknowledging on the one hand, the traditions and historical conventions upon which his teaching is based...of a dramatic landscape constructed upon common principles – and also what Lecoq's works necessitates the 'driving motors' – which have an ethical preoccupation with the power of theatre to break down barriers, to act as a unifying force. Four points of universal communication developed by the physical theatre company (and Lecoq graduates) Mummenschanz, include: 1) Human movement has the potential to communicate itself universally. 2) It is possible to find, or create, a fundamental language of theatre that can be understood anywhere. 3) Certain emotions and gestures have the power to be understood universally. 4) An instinct, or disposition, for play is a phenomenon that exists across different cultures. In Simon Murray, *Jacques Lecoq*, 2003.

in long-time friends or married couples who take on mannerisms, or speech patterns of the other. "If I cross my arms, or my legs, my interlocutor, without realising it, will copy my gesture" (Bradby, 2006, 3). It is essential to note that to pretend, make-believe, mock, parody or deceive are completely unrelated to Lecoq's work. These instead fall under the guise of mimicry:

> Miming differs from mimicry in this respect: it is not imitation but a way of grasping the real that is played out in our body. A normal human being is 'played' by the reality that reverberates in him. We are the receptacles of interactions that play themselves out spontaneously within us. Human beings think with their whole bodies; they are made up of complexes of gestures and reality is in them, without them, despite them (Jousse, 1969)

In his most concise pedagogical written work, *The Moving Body* (2000), Lecoq includes a glossary of special technical terms to better articulate the "corporeal writing" meaning of his teaching method (Miller, 2007, 20). Ten of these terms involve the word mime in some form[16]. Mimage and mimodynamic reference combinations, i.e. mime and image, mime and dynamic which represent merely one dimension of their expressive use. Both are heavily reliant on personal interpretation. For example, mimage is the recreation of a physical and or facial gesture that provides an image of a feeling, not explanatory in nature or descriptive of one's state of being, "but much more abstract movements which allow one to exteriorise elements which are naturally hidden in everyday behaviour" (102). What I might consider a sensation of excitement or anticipation, another might find anxious or tedious; thus, mimage can be a highly subjective process. Mimodynamic, on the other hand, is a bit trickier as it has "no reference point in the real world' (46). The mimodynamic process sets in motion rhythms, spaces, forces, and even the static

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[16] They include: "action mime, cartoon mime, figurative mime, open mime, white/pantomime, storytelling mime, melomime, mimage and mimodynamic". Jacques Lecoq, *The Moving Body*, 2000, 164-8.

nature of inanimate objects. Again, this requires introspection from the individual learner

to best display or project their particular perspective. For example, standing at the base of

the CN Tower, one can sense a "dynamic emotion" of the structure that when internalized

can reproduce a physical sensation in the form of an "upward surge" perhaps of a

powerlessness in relation to the domineering elevation of concrete, metal, and sheets of

glass. On the other hand, it could be empowering, it could provide hope, perhaps

overwhelmedness and so forth (47). The key in mimodynamic is to not figuratively

recreate the structure, i.e., standing on tippy-toes, arms stretched over head, palms of

hands clasped together as in representation of a giant needle, etc. Mimodynamics is a

very abstract concept as it is more than a visual translation it is an embodiment of

emotion. In the frame of this thesis research of a kinesthetic application to language

learning, these different degrees of miming provide the refugee learner a broader

exploratory base and range in which to understand new words or foreign culture customs.

It personalizes the experience by considering each individual's contribution ultimately

customizing the learning level. Lecoq suggests the significance of moving from

impression to expression:

> to find the 'interior body' of a mime…It's about searching deep down and finding
> the deposit that is the result of things that we have absorbed (impression)…It's as
> though one side of our skin is used to connect with the exterior world and the other
> side to connect with our interior world. These two sides must cooperate for us to
> make a distinction between impression and expression, between inspiration and
> expiration (Bradby, 2006, 112).

NEUTRAL MASK (masque neutre)

There are three masks:
The one we think we are,
The one we really are,
And the one we have in common (Jacques Lecoq)

There are two key aspects to neutral mask work: finding neutrality and the wearing of the mask. What makes neutral mask technique of actor's training a great learning tool is that it is never something learned or conquered and always remains a tool for improvement and exploration of new things (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 29). The concept of neutrality is the cornerstone of Lecoq's pedagogy as he believed it to be the starting point from which all other learning extends. Yet the impossibility of neutral behaviour is the very first discovery one makes (Frost and Yarrow, 1990/2007, 156). As preparation for "a body-in-life", the neutral mask and its impartiality unites all people as living things allowing us all to see ourselves in it equally (Barba and Savarese, 1991, 54; Bradby, 2006, 105). Examining the simplicity of "habitual reactions and fixed notations", including that which ultimately reproduces itself in language, provides an understructure for the actor/student to begin exploration of their body-self in new space (105). Six characteristics, which unite neutral body with neutral mask include:

1. symmetry
2. centeredness
3. integration and focus
4. energy
5. relaxation
6. being (presence), not doing (Eldredge, 1996, 53)

Departing from this axis of 'impossibility' everything becomes possible in the 'disponibilité' of the performer/student. The key is in the mask itself which is designed in such a way that it interprets no defining life expression or recognizable characteristics. It doesn't laugh or cry, nor is it sad or happy. It quite simply emits a sense of calmness and of balanced emotions, neutral in nature (Bradby, 2006, 105-112).

> Detached from your own face and words, both of which you can usually master in a social context, the body emerges as the only thing to guide you through the silence...There's no cheating with just your body. The neutral mask, which had originally allowed you to feel hidden, now exposes you. The mask that you wear in everyday life is gone, devoid of any purpose. You can feel each movement more

intensely than before. You can no longer use your eyes to play psychological games and your whole head must now turn for you to look. Your gestures become bigger and slower (105).

In its essence, the neutral mask is used to create awareness for the actor, or in this case the ELL student, to the physical space around them and of their place *in* the space. In its economy of movement and detailed precision the mask commands a state of discovery, openness and freedom to receive. Unable to hide behind "attention-catching expressions of the face" or the psychologically masked mechanics of the brain, the body forcibly "sticks out" and all its awkwardness is revealed (Frost and Yarrow, 2007, 107). Observing his 'show me don't tell me' motto, Lecoq used the nonnegotiable mask movements as a tool to expose unique physical characteristics. Verbal explanation is not necessary as the mask quickly dictates which movements and gestures can be clearly interpreted and those, often idiosyncratic in nature, that cannot (Hayden, 1991/1992, 19). Through trial and error, students begin to explore those common denominators that the balanced features of the mask will accept, will resonate, and like the learning of new language, those which will cross-culturally communicate. In neutral mask work there is no spoken language. Instead it demands that one look, hear, feel, and touch elementary things with a freshness of beginning (Lecoq, 2000, 38). A gentle exercise in heightening awareness and being faithful to the demands of the mask asks that students comprehend the nature of their own physical habits, to look within, to understand, in order to correct physical mannerisms on the outside. This is the common ground that neutral mask imposes and it is in this united state of neutrality that students are invited to experience the material world in a state of receptiveness to everything around, with no inner conflict (Lecoq, 2000, 36).

As theatrical characters are composed of real life human conflicts, histories,

contexts, passions and so forth, the neutral mask objectively juxtaposes these *etats* or

states of being and instead puts the actor/student in a harmony of perfect balance and

economy of movement. Having experienced perfect balance, the actor (student) is better

equipped to express "imbalance or conflictual states" (39). Lecoq uses the mask exercise

as part of a process where neutrality temporarily suspends the past to instead create a

space of open readiness, a liberation that permits the mime (student):

> to rediscover the world in a newly attained state of nonknowing ...In this condition the
> individual becomes the blank page...Everything is erased so he can start from scratch,
> seeing things for the first time (Felner, 1985, 158)

Shifting focus from a cognitive inclusiveness of communal spoken language,

hearing/comprehension or the subtleties of facial grimacing diverts attention instead to

accentuate the body which replaces the voice, ears, and face. Because the neutral mask,

as a full mask, is never able to communicate face to face with another mask, observation

and awareness towards *disponibilité* and *complicité* intensifies, focusing instead on how

the body speaks as it moves (Frost and Yarrow, 2007, 86). The world, including the

universe of the classroom, makes impressions on the body. These impressions inspire

gestures which eventually inspires feeling which leads to the making of unique, physical,

meaning (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, 76; Keefe and Murray, 2007, 187).

SENSORY/EMOTION (les sensations/grandes emotions)

As visual, aural, tactile, and aromatic creatures, our senses not only guide us, they

inform our perceptual awareness (Banes and Lepecki, 2007, 125). Vital to an actor's

training, senses become the means of experiencing, connecting and contacting with the

world (Frost and Yarrow, 2007, 146). They feed the "aesthetic outer" body in the

development of self-knowledge, preparing the instrument to be the site for both

representation and experience, sometimes separately, often simultaneously (Banes and Lepecki, 2007, 58). Lecoq's pedagogy expresses that knowledge comes through movement and so he attempts to initiate return to a place of precognition that frees the student to assemble a new set of sensory impressions in a neutralized state of naïveté (Felner, 1985, 153). Unlike Stanislavsky's affective sensory of emotional recall, Lecoq frames taste, smell, sound, touch, and vision in the vast human interactions with the four elements of water, fire, earth and air. This engages subjective knowledge, memory, and associational reference. It also introduces a process toward the abstract by exploration of the external world that begins with sensing inner, physical realities. Here the task becomes how to convey the broad range of stimuli outside a cognitive or linguistic framework and why (Johnson, 1995, 126). It is no secret that we intersubjectively engage in the world through our sensorimotor "surface body" (Banes and Lepecki, 2007, 50-51). In a theatrical context, recalling stored sensory information is "central to the process of personalizing and concretizing the imaginary reconstruction" needed for performance recreation (Frost and Yarrow, 2007, 146). By expanding the perspective of "the entire body as a sensing apparatus (and) engaging the space between self, other people, and surrounding objects" alleviates the filters that confine experience to rules of semiotics, and limits of language or words (Banes and Lepecki, 2007,166; Johnson, 1995, 126). Eliminating the psychological narrative eases the sense of what's happening which is where Lecoq, in complete unorthodoxy, believed that learning begins (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, 34). He criticized all theatrical techniques reliant on the psychological, cerebral contortions of the mind, but this does not reflect or simplify his theory as merely an external approach. He sought to lead the actor/student to seek "a truth of expression through the logic of the

body's experience", by tuning into the sensory impressions of how we identify with the

world (60). Lecoq was interested in broadening opportunities for the making of individual

meaning, personal or abstract (Bradby, 2006, 76). He believed that starting from the

concreteness of precise resources based on physical realities trains the body to express

interior workings.

> What is important is to *understand*…understanding makes it possible not to stop at the results but to go further, to go beyond. The actor *who knows* how to execute a certain number of exercises perfectly, who *knows how* to supply a certain number of good effects, is likely an actor without perspectives, like someone who has memorized 20 or 100 sentences in a language of which he is otherwise ignorant…*To know is not to understand.* The way of mastering a work process is something which is absorbed…within determined work relationships and conditions. It is when (this) process has been absorbed, when it has been *understood*, that one understands what one *knows* (Barba, 1985/1986, 90-91 original italics).

At Lecoq's *École Internationale de Theatre* the study of 'states' of being (*les*

états) in the form of passions, feelings and dynamic human emotion, are essential

requirements for embodied learning. In this acting context the states of being are

necessary to explore as they represent fundamental shared human traits in their varying

degrees (from upheaval to bliss) that provide precious genuine references from which

identity draws. An open body, versus a closed body invites sensorial perception to a new

culture through the guidance of sounds, smells, kinesthetic experiences for the sensing of

emotion (Duncum and Springgay, 2007, 1143). This adds an aesthetic dimension to the

changes occurring in one's life or body that "constructs and shapes one's identity and

personal narratives" (1144). Academic language is not always the best way to describe

the subjective experience of perception (Johnson, 1995, 126). Language, in general, is

the expedient means to thinking and communicating thoughts and is of utmost necessity

to cultural integration. Yet non-verbal or intuitive means of thinking can alleviate the

which do not move and in which we can nevertheless recognize dynamic elements, such as colours, words, architecture. We can see neither the form nor the movement of a colour, nevertheless the emotion which they arouse may set us in motion – even in emotion. We try to express this particular emotion through mimages through gestures which have no reference point in the real world... (I)n fact we constantly mime the world around us (propelled by our 'e'-motions) (46).

The *universal poetic sense* was used to encourage students to develop their own creativity and lead them to find their own voice rather than limiting their ideas to what they know or make assumptions about how they think things may appear.

THE BODY OF WORDS

Gesture

As a fitting introduction to this section, Wagner (1998) writes "before we could talk, we used gestures to communicate" (63). At his school Jacques Lecoq's training guides the first year student from the silent to the spoken word. He teaches the art of listening, to sense when all that could be communicated without words has been relayed and *'la parole'* (the word) is necessary to continue. This central tenet stemmed from his theory that words function as living organisms dependent on the exploration of the *body* of words to express them (Lecoq, 2000, 49 original italic). Given the nature of the student population at Lecoq's *International Theatre School,* considerable attention is given to the interpretative creativity of the many different languages and countries represented including: (during my years at the school) French, English, German, Italian, Korean, Arabic, Japanese, Spanish, to name but a prominent few. According to the language used Lecoq demonstrates that all words will not have the same relation to the body and thus resonate differently on the stage. For example, 'Je prends', 'Ich nehme', 'I take' all reverberate at various levels in their native languages. To 'take' in English could

imply to grab, to acquire, to gain, or to take back which reflects the accompanied corporeal movement and thus the learning comprehension of the word. In correlation with audible subtleties of foreign language use, Lecoq proposes how in French 'le beurre' rolls off the tongue as if it is already spread, whereas the English translation 'butter' implies it is still in a packet (49). His pedagogy hones in on two major zones of silence "before and after speech" on the stage (Lecoq, 2000, 29). It is within the frame of the stage, between these (two) parameters, that the actor's character comes alive through the interpretative, (re) creation of human nature, from observations of real life (Bradby, 2006, 8). When there is no text reliance to emphasize description the physical instrument continues to speak, albeit silently: "Quite often, we only verbally express what we would very much like to show; but the slightest gesture reveals what we would have liked to hide" (54).

All peoples, from all countries, display their own particular bodies of movement. Many casual gestures that we embody are naturally acquired in childhood of familial mimicry complete with generational enhancement and/or modifications (Bradby, 2006, 22). As well, gestures are culturally produced through tool and sign system mediators (such as language), and writing and number systems, that organize internal behaviour and reflect the organization of external, socio-cultural behaviour (Vygotsky, 1978, 7). The key criteria that defines gesture as a structured language is, quite simply, the need to communicate. Gesture in and of itself, does not nor cannot, replace spoken communication. Its motivation does not lie in communicating concept, but rather the expression of emotions (Feyereisen and de Lannoy, 1991, 2). Lecoq unifies the high volume of cultural diverse students at the School by focussing on emotional essences of

life made up of spaces, lights, colours, materials, and sounds that we can all identify with (Lecoq, 2000, 46). That is to say, tangible and factual elements that can be shared and explored minus psychological, subjective, emotionality connected to it. I can verify that Monsieur Lecoq vehemently refused any notion of *therapy* through his theatre teachings; that is to say, emotional work was never intended or exploited for healing purposes, psychological or otherwise:

> ...one part of my interest is focused on theatre, the other on life... to educate people to be at ease in both. My hope, perhaps utopian, is for my students to be consummate livers of life and complete artists on stage (Lecoq, 2000,18).

The word emotion means etymologically "setting in motion", where according to Lecoq an emotive state finds and applies a physical circuit which catalogues itself in our memory as we repeat and identify it as such (Lecoq 2000, 47; Bradby, 2006, 6). For example, "a smile is a smile is a smile, the world over. A frown is a frown, a stare is a stare, and a shaken fist leaves no doubt about the mood of its owner" (Morris, 1994, i). Add to these obvious examples Lecoq's research on gestures of expression that engage emotions and basic states of being, gestures of action which involve the whole body, gestures of demonstration that punctuate, precede, prolong or replace words, gestures of passion, of action/reaction, of mimicry, facial gestures, and so on (Bradby, 2006, 9). The next two specific techniques advance gesture use in an organic evolution toward language and communication through applications known as pantomime and *grommeler,* otherwise known as gibberish.

Pantomime and *Grommeler*[18]/Gibberish

Each of the prior steps (i.e. discovery of body-self in space, analysis of

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[18] Grommeler/gibberish: "a mixture of real words, mime and silent improvisation derived from the study of the (Italian theatre's) commedia dell'arte and popular theatre. It was a creative tension between text and improvisation with the constant danger that one would overwhelm the other". Anthony Frost and Ralph Yarrow. *Improvisation in Drama*, 2007, 34.

movement, neutral mask, and sensorial awareness) prepare the student for pantomime. The basic consensual rule of pantomime is that gestures replace words under the constraint of not being able to use or rely upon spoken language (Keefe and Murray, 2007, 191). Pantomimic language, as an unspoken language, "finds its source in the silence of life, the inexpressible murmurings" (Bradby, 2006, 51). The 'speech' is one of expressive movements which unleash a spread of affect, where in the absence of the system of linguistics the actor/student "writes with his body in space" the essence of objects and images (Vygotsky, 1987, 7; Bradby, 2006, xiii). When we "see a performance in a foreign language, we understand and recognize this as a language of gesture consisting of movements, of music and of sounds", perhaps subjectively interpreting but nonetheless responding to the play's universality(8).

> Pantomimes are silent songs, interior cries, visual sonatas or symphonies...
> Sculpting space, making visible the invisible and the invisible the visible...
> (Bradby, 2006, 64).

In Lecoq's theatre pantomime becomes the portal to play, otherwise known as acting. At the School, play is a very defined area of actor training introduced only when the student acquires an awareness of the theatrical dimension and can shape improvisation using rhythm, tempo, space, and form (Lecoq, 2000, 29). Pedagogically, Lecoq approaches play in an amusing improvisational sense, succeeding the heightened psychological replay[19] of the silent mask exercises to "reviving lived experience in the simplest possible way" (Lecoq, 2000, 29). The key to pantomime is in reducing an experience or an idea to its most basic form to allow for comprehension and eventual scaffolding (in the form of characterization, scene objective, intricacies of plot and so

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[19] Lecoq interprets psychological replay as a structure for play where avoiding any form of transposition or exaggeration, the student remains strictly faithful to their own psychological reenactment of a simple life situation. In Jacques Lecoq's, *The Moving Body*, 2000.

forth) on which to develop the play. Much like innate play which connects directly to the actors' experience thereby lessening resistance to foreign exploration of process and instead draws from an alive place of the imaginative space (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, 34). Acting from their own reserve provides the student actor a sense of creative authorship for their play, which in turn offers the opportunity to express his/her voice and not simply "act as a mouthpiece and interpreter" (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, 34). Introducing broad themes taken from everyday experiences of cultural situations as riding the subway system, grocery shopping at the market, going to the bank or the doctor's office, connects innumerable external situations to internal, personal interpretations for silent play. Introductory pantomime seeks first to understand the body's movement and action in context, purposely delaying cognitive diagnosis of the situation and subsequent use of the spoken word. Lecoq believed that comprehension of movement is discovered out of the lack of movement where the silence of immobility eventually mobilizes sound which communicates as language articulated through words (Lecoq, 2000, 35). Appropriate sounds, not those of the cerebral or forced kind can extend the feeling or phrase of movement and enhance a sense of interconnectedness. This is where the next step of *grommeler* or gibberish comes into play. Gibberish is a nonsensical battery of sounds strewn together in any configuration of the alphabet (any alphabet) to create a language of sorts where the ultimate aim is to make sense. Gibberish should be introduced when students have a good grasp of gesture and sensory meaning and are free in their affect to playfully take on the exploratory work of sounds. The added caveat with this exercise for students who speak other languages or dialects is that they don't cheat by speaking in another established tongue. This is a fact easily recognizable by a confident

ease and cognitive comprehension students make of the gibberish. Explosive, familiar reactions of giggles or gasps from other classmates who share that same mother tongue also usually betrays them. I have found that explaining rules and purpose of gibberish (ultimately to communicate and be understood without the reliance of an established language) enables students to understand the intrinsic value. This explanation helps to justify and to commit to the exercise, thereby aiding in the typical fear of sounding foolish (Frost and Yarrow, 2007,129). Storr (2006) reminds us that "people are generally afraid of things that are unfamiliar to them…they are most afraid of the embarrassment of appearing not to get it" (23). A very common gibberish improvisation is to give a specific theme or subject on which one student must speak in gibberish, complete with gesture, while a second student must translate for the class. It is key to note "the translator does not invent the meaning, but attempts to derive it from the gibberish speaker" (Johnston,1998, 125). Gibberish has long been used in theatre as a way to unblock resistances in scenes, rehearsal, improvisation, or in emotion an actor is trying to release. Certain situations or events that trigger a block do not always come with an explanation. On the stage breaking away from form and convention of the scene or character by rehearsing in gibberish can often provide insight and a freeing dimension where the rigidity of text structure might not allow. Blocking can be both a physical and a mental problem and can usually be investigated by focusing on collective response situations: rearranging the scene order; including a silly prop; interspersing invented commentary into an actor's speech; reciting lines while laughing; and so forth. The point is to shake up static assumptions and fears. Gibberish comes from sound, sound is released by the body as a form of expression, and the body gives voice to the repertoire of living

movements we sculpt everyday. Gestures, sounds, gibberish, voice, language, are all connected by the breath – ultimately returning us to the body (Lecoq, 2000). The breath feeds the physical preparation which lays the groundwork for the vocals to break the silence. The following is a typical breath exercise used in acting class:

> The student actors lie still on the floor and listen. First they listen to the sounds emanating from their own bodies, their breathing perhaps, or the noises of digestion. Imaginatively, they are listening to the sound of their own heartbeat. The actor is still silent, but concentrated and aware. Next, without losing the first set of sounds, if possible, they expand their awareness to include other sounds from within the room: the sound of others breathing, most especially, as well as the incidental background noises of the plumbing, and from time to time the quiet, reassuring voice of the teacher or director. Then, the actor listens to *all* the sounds from within the audible range. He admits into consciousness the noise of traffic from outside the room, birdsong, people talking along the corridor, whist trying not to lose the original set of sounds. This magnified consciousness is too diverse at first, and so the actors are asked to come back to the middle stage, and stay at that level for some time, making occasional forays into the smaller and larger regions. Actually, it is the middle level that the actor must learn to operate in. He has to be aware, albeit subliminally, of the whole space within which he operates, and of all those who share it with him (Frost and Yarrow, 2007, 130-1original italics).

Its goal is to develop awareness, presence and sense of self. I have witnessed its effectiveness by the very fact that it simplifies a focus that returns one to their body.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

My research intent is to organize a creative teaching method based on Jacques Lecoq's pedagogy that contributes breadth and depth to the English language learning (ELL) classroom. Each of the five areas of Lecoq's theatre training covered in this chapter: space, movement, neutral mask, sensory/emotion and body of words (gesture, pantomime, gibberish), offer an alternative embodied dimension in which to explore learning English. Embodiment is about understanding or making sense, "situated at the level of lived experience and not that of discourse" (Csordas 1990, 10). Language

learning is rooted in the physical and emanates from the capacity of the individual. (10).

Place is essentially a static concept that society has organized in a world of meaning

(Tuan, 1977, 179). Providing ELL student's a space for experience, inadvertently

engages the development of their new cultural identity where curriculum fosters the

making of meaning drawing from the social intercourse of school culture. For the new

language learner the Lecoq exercises offer gradual steps in which to interact and engage

with the new language in a new life setting. A study of diverse culture with a focus on

embodiment, advertently embodies the society to socially inform the "citizen body" (Van

Wolputte, 2004, 257; Bourdieu, 1977, 82). New language students are not transforming

self to fit into the prevailing ideas of Canadian culture, but are empowered to look to

themselves to instrumentally contribute in the shaping of it (James, 1995,2).

In chapter four I demonstrate in greater detail how the five particular aspects of

Jacques Lecoq's training might welcome and motivate the young language learner into

the classroom community, while subsequently supporting the immense challenges they

face in 'catching up' academically (Schecter and Cummins, 2003, 11). The next chapter

outlines the theory of educational psychologist Lev Vygotsky. His extensive research in

social and cultural influences on human development provide a solid structure from

which to scaffold Lecoq's kinesthetic applications to the language learning classroom.

Figure 2

SELECTED THEORIES OF LEV VYGOTSKY

- **SOCIO-CULTURAL THEORY**

- **ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT**

- **SEMIOTIC MEDIATION**

- **The Making of Meaning**

  CONTEXT
  CONCEPTS
  SENSE

- **GESTURE & MEDIATION**

  PRE-VERBAL TO VERBAL
  SYMBOLIC PLAY
  IMITATION/MIMICRY

Chapter Three: LEV VYGOTSKY

VYGOTSKIAN OVERVIEW

I have selected particular aspects of Lev Vygotsky's highly theoretical, psycho-analytic body of work pertinent to reinforcing my study of a theatre application to the learning of English. These chosen areas of Vygotsky's analyses (Figure 2) and terminology are the scientific lens from which to consider Lecoq's creative pedagogy. What is most captivating about Vygotsky is his revolutionary research on the correlative dynamics between people and how they are informed by the context of their social environments. Even more compelling for my exploration are the influences of his artistic interests which shaped his views on human psychological processes. This offers a fitting platform from which to observe "the tensions between science and the arts" of which Vygotsky offered "art differs from science only in its method, of experience and perception" (Eisner, 2002;Vygotsky, 1971,31).

There are three distinct aspects of Vygotsky's work which underscore Lecoq's practical Exercises: Socio-Cultural Theory (SCT); Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and; semiotic mediation. The SCT demonstrates how the social world guides child mental growth and maturation. This he believed follows an external to internal directional route by way of social (outer) speech, to egocentric (private) speech, to inner speech[20] which all lead to the construction of thought. In Vygotsky's analyses thought construction begins the process of learning for development (Vygotsky, 1986, 86). Vygotsky's core claim was that individuals are socially organized entities and therefore the very source of

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[20] Inner speech serves a variety of functions: planning, reflection and generation/creation – reordering or transforming the givens of consciousness into new perspectives or insights…writers, scientists, musicians, and other creative thinkers often provide evidence in their notebooks of what we have come to call "inner speech" writing…these notes are jottings to the self" *John-Steiner, Panofsky, Smith,* 1994, 17.

human development resides in the shared environment (Lantolf, 2007, 32). This fully

resonates with Lecoq's attention to the external world and the geometry of the physical

body's movement in relation to the horizontal and the vertical, giving priority to what

exists outside the self (Lecoq, 2000, 19). Both theorists in their respective fields of study

claimed that people discover themselves in relation to their grasp of the external world

(19).

I examine Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as a key

developmental space or area of activity in the process of learning. The learning is focused

toward the acquisition of new language and culture (Ohta, 2005;Newman and Holzman,

1993).

Semiotic mediation is yet another revolutionary Vygotskian attribute to how

humans conceptualize thought. As a way of "decontextualizing mediational means"

semiotics allows for new ways to approach and think about ideas drawn from social

resources that instrumentally reflect our formation of language and in a broader sense our

identity (Nicholl, 1998).

Together the SCT, ZPD, and semiotic mediation provide the solid bedrock to

scaffold the intricate constructs that guide, inform and ignite individual motivation

(Salkind, 2008). In application they dissect the mechanics behind a sensory/corporeal

approach to language and what it can offer a second or new language learning identity

development, i.e., deconstructing the motor which runs the machine.

Where Vygotsky addresses children as subjects I refer to refugee youth and their

integration. I sense a distinct correlation between Vygotsky's rudimentary childhood

investigations and the shaping of western experience for the uprooted refugee teen. The

most obvious connection being how social interaction transforms practical activity:

> Prior to the mastering of behavior, the child begins to master the surroundings with the help of speech. This produces new relations with the environment in addition to the new organization of behavior itself (Vygotsky, 1978, 25).

Of great interest to me is the amalgamation of prior, accumulated, socio-historical/cultural knowledge brought by refugee youth with that which they will discover in the new environment. This interest seeks to incorporate their prior development into a rebuilding which included new language learning. Vygotsky believed the development of language is a development of social existence which in turn develops the individuated persons and their culture (John Steiner and Tatter, 1983, 83). I feel by renegotiating the first language, and stimuli provided in the new surroundings of the classroom, this statement can also apply to the process of learning a new language.

> Consciousness is reflected in a word as the sun in a drop of water. A word relates to consciousness as a living cell relates to a whole organism, as an atom relates to the universe. A word is a microcosm of human consciousness. (Vygotsky, 1986, 256)

ON LEV VYGOTSKY (1896-1934)

Lev Vygotsky died at a young age. We only know pieces from his academic history combined with traced reminiscences from friends and coworkers. He did not leave a memoir. A resurgence of his work in the late 1960s and early 1970s immortalized his prolific work as a developmental and educational psychologist. Appropriate to the contents of my study, Vygotsky began his illustrious career as a literary-art critic satiating his first love of poetry and the arts with a particular passion for the theatre. It is also of great relevance to identify the historically transformative period in which he lived. Vygotsky's 1910 Moscow was a revolutionary time when many traditional and formulaic areas of science, the humanities and the arts were being challenged by unorthodox and

innovative trends (Vygotsky, 1986, xiii). This led to the era of the 'Silver Age in Russian culture'[21] of which Vygotsky was most definitely a product. At his parents insistence Vygotsky dutifully enrolled in medical school, then switched to Law school and switched again to major in History and Philosophy. These areas were sufficiently academic in nature to appease his parents providing him some academic liberty closer to the origins of his love for the arts. He went on to teach literature in a provincial high school, then at a local college where he first encountered the problem of education and the physically (dis)abled, questions of which would surface in his work years later. At the same time he was writing a manuscript titled *The Psychology of Art* which he presented as his doctoral thesis to the Moscow Institute of Psychology in 1925. His natural genius in the arena of psychology did not deter Vygtosky from including poetic images in his early scientific research and writings, permissible perhaps due to the 'radical' influences of the time. What he related with particular interest was "the poetic treatment of the agony endured when thought seeks, but cannot find expression in, words" (Kozulin, 1986, xiv). He greatly admired fellow countryman Konstantin Stanislavski, whose Moscow Art Theatre introduced an unprecedented inner, empirical acting technique unheard of in the early Twentieth Century. Prior to the 'Silver Age' drama schools "everywhere in the world taught only physical elements of an actor's training: ballet, fencing, voice..." confining artistic instruction to the external (Moore, 1965, 9). Stanislavski on the other hand, was investigating the deliberate arousal of emotion by indirectly influencing the psychological mechanisms behind a given emotional state (Moore, 1965, 12). His method relied on

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[21] "Silver Age of Russian culture" was a time when drama, poetry, arts, and literature had a language of their own. It is a well established period of Renaissance for art and culture in the Russian Empire commencing at the start of the XXth century, and was tragically interrupted by Bolsheviks in 1917. Vygotsky, the student, was one of the most active participants of that cultural space. His first published articles were on literary criticism and theatre. Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991; Vygodskaya & Lifanova, 1996.

affective memory where the actor is asked to draw from the inner workings of the

subconscious (12, original italics). In decades to follow, Stanislavski's 'Method' would

evolve to such heights that it was referred to as the "science of theatre" (Moore, 1965, 7).

Ironically, the sphere of psychological study during this post-revolutionary period

continued to take guidance of man's nature via philosophic discourse (Vygotsky, 1978,

2). In *The Psychology of Art*, Vygotsky argues that the predominant reflexologist

approach to scientific psychology could no longer continue to ignore the facts of neither

consciousness nor that of the unconscious (Kozulin, 1986, xvi). Emerging as an original

thinker with no formal psychological training, Vygotsky entered the field of professional

psychology. He audaciously challenged the system by exploring a theory that radically

applied Marxist[22] socialism to the psychological beliefs of the day that statically

compartmentalized studies by splitting "the human being into machinelike body and

spiritual mind" (Kozulin, 1986, xiv-xvi). Perhaps influenced by his observations of art

and culture (those stimulated by higher mental functions[23]), Vygotsky sought to prove

that individual consciousness is built from the outside through relations and external

interactivities with others:

> We are aware of ourselves, for we are aware of others and in the same way as we
> know others; and this is as it is because in relation to ourselves we are in the same
> (postion) as others are to us. (Vygotsky, 1986, xxiv)

In the years to come he established the *Institute of Defectology in Moscow* finding

himself once again examining the problems of educational practice for the mentally and

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[22] Marxist theory of society (known as historical materialism) also played a fundamental role in Vygotsky's thinking. According to Marx, historical changes in society and material life produce changes in "human nature" (consciousness and behaviour) Vygotsky, *Mind In Society*, 1978, 7.

[23] Vygotsky made a principal distinction between "lower", natural mental functions and "higher", cultural functions. The former activate elementary perception, memory, attention, and will. Where the latter are specifically human and appear gradually through radical transformation of the lower functions. The lower functions don't just disappear in a mature psyche, but are structured and organized according to the specifics of human goals and means of conduct. Alex Kozulin, (ed.), *Thought In Language: Lev Vygotsky*, 1986.

physically (dis)abled. By investigating what was different from the so-called 'normally'

functioning brain Vygotsky saw opportunities and established programs for treatment.

This led to a deeper understanding of mental function and processes in general which

eventually contributed to his theories. It also extended into his general theoretical view

that this work should be incorporated in the elimination of illiteracy and as a foundation

for educational programs to maximize the fullest potential of all children (Vygotsky,

1978, 9).

SCT: LEARNING to DEVELOPMENT

Vygotsky first adapted a socio-cultural theory (SCT) for learning and

development "based on the concept that human activities take place in cultural contexts,

are mediated by language and other symbol systems, and can be best understood when

investigated in their historical development" (John-Stiener and Mahn, 1996, 1). History

in a Vygotskian sense does not merely imply the study of past events, but rather the study

of something in the process of change (Vygotsky, 1978, 65). Therefore SCT derives from

a socio-historical perspective or quite simply, a history of behaviour.[24] Vygotsky

reasoned that to discover a "given thing's development" (phases and changes, from birth

to death) meant to discover its nature, its essence in movement (in a span of time), for

the body to reveal what it truly is (65). In other words, all present growth basically hinges

on past growth (Vygotsky, 1986,125). Conceptualizing "development as the

transformation of socially shared activities into internalized processes", he delineated

learning process as the superstructure over development (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996,

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[24] P.P. Blonsky stated "The search for method becomes one of the most important problems of the entire enterprise of understanding the uniquely human forms of psychological activity. In this case, the method is simultaneously prerequisite and product, the tool and the result of the study." *Essays in Scientific Psychology*. Moscow: State Publishing House, 1921.

2; Vygotsky, 1978, 80). That is, learning is a prerequisite to development and not vice

versa -- as was widely assumed in his day[25]. Internalization[26] is the prerequisite for "the

life-long processes needed in the co-construction of knowledge and the creation of the

new" (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996, 8). He emphasized that the childhood process of

learning assists in the process of development which shapes the initial biological steps of

action to thought to language process order:

> Development processes do not coincide with learning processes, rather the
> development process lags behind the learning process; this sequence then results in
> zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978, 90).

To get a better comprehension of Vygotsky's SCT processes of learning to

development is to present a highly scientific breakdown of how human psychological

processes organize themselves through three basic cultural factors:

1. Activities: play, education, work, legal and medical systems and aesthetic creation
2. Artefacts : physical tools, books, weapons, eating utensils, clocks, computers and
related technology as well as symbolic tools, including language numeric systems,
diagrams, charts, music, and art
3. Concepts : the understandings that communities construct of the personal, the
physical, the social and mental worlds, religion, etc (Lantolf, 2006, 69)

Although separately categorized, normal human function typically integrates them

simultaneously. Education incorporates both physical and symbolic artefacts (books,

computers, pencils, numbers, diagrams, and language) with the intent to help students

develop sound concepts that are pertinent to navigate their environment (69). Vygotsky

believed that by properly organizing learning results (in mental development) a myriad of

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[25] *Piaget, individual children construct knowledge through their actions on the world:* to understand is to invent. *By contrast, the Vygotskian claim is said to be that understanding is social in origin.* Beyond the Individual-Social Antimony in Discussions of Piaget and Vygotsky. Michael Cole, University of California, San Diego and James V. Wertsch, Washington University, St. Louis
26 Internalization: the internal reconstruction of an external operation L.S. Vygotsky. *Mind in Society*, 1978, 56.

opportunities to process development and for the development of process are set in motion (Vygotsky, 1978, 90). He observed children assimilating word meaning, mastering numerical addition or learning to write, thereby concluding this juncture where the developmental processes truly begins (90).

In his eventual specialization of pedology (derived from the studies of pedagogy and psychology) Vygotsky's research concerns were to demonstrate how children internalize external knowledge and abilities (91). To Vygotsky, revealing an analysis of development was instrumental in uncovering the internal relationship of intellectual processes ignited in school learning. The objective was to potentially reveal to educators insight into how mental stimulation of their course material activities were internally processing the heads of their students (91).

ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

The basic tenet of ZPD is determined by cognitive tasks that a learner can complete in unison with an adult or advanced peer (i.e., teacher, instructor, the director). The emphasis lies in the belief that what the student can complete with assistance today he/she will accomplish alone tomorrow. ZPD as a conceptual framework provides an area for learning and development and *in which* to learn and develop. In Vygotsky's view, these two processes were not given equivalency. That is, learning creates the possibility of development by way of a socio-cultural frame which "situates learning within a relationship among mutually dependent individuals" (John-Steiner, Panofsky, Smith, 1994, 8). Development, on the other hand, possesses several substructures in the form of actual cycles, completed cycles and the cyclic potential. Independent functioning constitutes the actual cycle, otherwise known as the established degree to which a young

person can cognitively complete a task. The "level at which he or she can function while participating in instructional social interaction" encompasses the level of potential development (Rogoff and Wertsch, 1984). Tucked in between the space of learning and development defines the boundaries of the ZPD. In one of Vygotsky's most famous books, *Thought and Language* (1986) he compares the layered composition of development to the geological structure of the Earth's core where "the older layers do not die out when the new emerges, but are superseded by it" (xxix). There is a mutual interdependence between the individual mind and the socio-cultural system from which it resources. With development, the mind becomes increasingly powerful due to its accumulated cognitive resources. In time there develops a deepening commitment to the particular socio-cultural resource that informed the learning and from where the learning took place (Serpell,1993, 366). This agrees with what Vygotsky's termed the "timing of learning" where *noticing* emphasizes the role of conscious awareness (John-Steiner, Panofsky, Smith,1994, 8; Schmidt, 1990; Ota, 508). An overall beneficial aspect of the ZPD is its inclusive factor regardless of where in the ZPD a particular student is functioning. Learning awakens a myriad of internal developmental processes that are set in motion only when the child is interacting with people in their environment or in cooperation with their peers (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996). Effectively organizing the learning results of development, sets in motion abundant opportunities for other levels of developmental processes.

SEMIOTIC MEDIATION

Vygotsky's semiotic mediation theory is based on the foundation that cultural

knowledge is transferred through individual processes of mediated internalization[27]. This

notion of mediation is what distinguishes his approach from those of his contemporaries

(Piaget, Mead, and Janet) since he maintained that the construction of meaning is always

social in origin (Wertsch, Tulviste, and Hagstrom,1993, 341). Vygotsky argued that a

child's cultural development appears twice, initially on a social level between people

(interpsychological), and later on an individual level i.e. inside the child

(intrapsychological) (Vygotsky, 1978, 57).

According to Vygotsky's theory, critical features that motivate human action to

make meaning context, content, and sense are mediated via semiotic mechanisms of tools

and signs. The following qualify as examples of 'signs' and their complex systems:

language; various systems for counting; mnemonic techniques; algebraic symbol

systems; works of art; writing; schemes, diagrams, maps, and mechanical drawings (341).

These mediational means as products of socio-cultural evolution are appropriated by

groups or individuals as they carry out mental functions (341). They are instrumental in

social and individual functioning, by connecting the external and the internal, the social

and the individual (Wertsch and Stone, 1985). Mediation therefore becomes the key to

understanding how human mental functioning connects to cultural, institutional, and

historical settings which shape and provide the cultural tools that are then mastered by

individuals to form mental functioning (Wertsch, 1994, 204). These mediational means as

the 'carriers' of socio-cultural patterns and knowledge allow us to interpret the social in

order to inform the egocentric to inner to thought processes (204). Cultural artifacts are

both conceptual (such as language) and material (books, computer tools, and scientific

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[27] Of which I merely allude to in this thesis study of an embodied theatre application.

equipment), as well as socially elaborated symbols (social values and beliefs, the cumulative knowledge of their culture, and the scientifically expanded concepts of reality) (Vygotsky, 1978, 126). Some such as languages or mastery of artefacts are easier to modify and develop than elaborated symbols, usually inherent and embedded in society or tradition. Vygotsky also viewed socio-cultural physical tools: the paint brush, the computer, calendars, and symbol systems, as central to the gaining of knowledge through representational activity by the developing individual. These mediators help us interact and coordinate our activities with and in the physical world as well as with each other.

> The distinction between signs and tools is a good example of Vygotsky's analytical capacity to interweave diverse and similar aspects of human experience. Some other examples are thought and language, immediate and mediated memory, and, on a broader scale, the biological and the cultural, the individual and the social (John-Steiner and Souberman, 1978, 127).

Vygotsky viewed two types of mental processes from which we actively mediate function: the lower and higher. Lower mental functions are genetically inherited and act as direct, instinctual responses to the environment where higher mental functions are culturally mediated involving direct but also indirect action. That is, higher mental functions "usually appear initially in an external form because they are social processes" (Wertsch, 1985, 62). This implies that understanding which may be influential to evolving from a lower to a higher mental function (in learning) is in direct proportion to the external social processes available in one's given cultural environment (Viseu, 2000, 4). Quite simply, lower mental functions elicit limited behavioural and mental functioning at an elementary level. Of all the psychological tools needed to mediate our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, language is the most important. With language, we

are provided an essential tool to assist in gaining self awareness and consequently

voluntary control of our actions (Nicholl, 1978). Without learning which occurs as a

result of the social interaction of higher mental functions without self awareness or the

use of evolved signs and symbols residing in that of our cultural environment to stimulate

thought in more complex ways, one remains subject to merely responding directly to the

environment (Wertsch, 1991,18). This is best illustrated in a field study Vygotsky

conducted in remote parts of Soviet Central Asia in the 1930s. The objective was to

observe the psychological changes of those living in the area affected by socioeconomic

and cultural restructuring. The study focused on illiterate peasants and farm workers who

had minimal exposure to schooling or any formal education:

> (the) illiterate peasants failed to perform abstract acts...either grouping objects
> according to principles of usefulness or lumping them all together according to the
> dictates of practical situations...(their) speech and reasoning simply echoed the
> patterns of practical, situational activity, while for the people (farm workers) with
> some education the relation was reversed: abstract categories and word meanings
> dominated situational experience and restructured it (Kozulin, 1986, xl)

The conclusion of the field study fully demonstrated the basic tenets of

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory vis-à-vis restricted mental functioning stimulus. It

confirmed that an absence of a system of signs, especially linguistic, resulted in only

limited communication (Vygotsky, 1986, 7). In delving further into a study between the

development of understanding and communication, he concluded that 'real'

communication requires meaning. He wrote "a word without meaning is an empty

sound, no longer a part of human speech" (Vygotsky, 1986, 6). This merits a look into

how Vygotsky theorized the acquisition (SCT), processing (sense and context), and

understanding (concepts) in which meaning is made.

MAKING of MEANING

Vygotsky's experimental study on children resulted in the discovery that "the child does not choose the meaning of his words; the meanings of words are given to him in his conversations with adults" (Vygotsky, 1986,122). A child first learns to understand others and only afterwards, following the same model, learns to understand himself – and thereby makes his own meaning. His theory followed the belief that "meaning is not *in* the language, but instead is in the social group's *use* of the language" (John-Steiner, Panofsky, Smith, 1994, 40 original italics). Socio-cultural theory emphasizes the making of language meaning within social relationships through dialogue (John-Steiner, Panofsky, Smith, 1994, 38). As a cognitive perspective, this implies that speech projected for and to another, aids in giving it a for(u)m for meaning. In this context, the word becomes both the sign and the tool for social interaction (Vygotsky, 1986, 139). It is the indicator and a bridge to mutual comprehension. In other words, through speech and for the sake of speech we are dependant on one another to make meaning and for the making of meaning, thereby rendering us unable to make meaning alone (139).

Of interest to this research is Vygotsky's connection to sense and meaning claiming " The dictionary meaning of a word is no more than a stone in the edifice of sense, no more than a potentiality..." (Vygotsky, 1986, 245). He elaborated that the sense of a word has far more superiority over its meaning, and the sensing a word equalled "the sum of all the psychological events aroused in our individual consciousness by the word" (244). In order to make sense, sense requires a context. When the context changes, you change the sense which alters its meaning (Kozulin, 1986, xxxvii).

> ...the sense of a word is connected with the whole word, and not with its single
> sounds, the sense of a sentence is connected with the whole sentence, and not with

its individual word. Therefore, a word may sometimes be replaced by another without any change in sense. Words and senses are relatively independent of each other…In oral speech, we move from the central and permanent meaning of the word to its soft fringes and ultimately to its sense. In inner speech (speech for self), this prevalence of sense over meaning, of sentence over word, and of context over sentence is the rule (Vygotsky, 1987, 246).

Examining language and literacy issues, Vygotsky recognized the effects of both immediate contextual constraints and the wider social, historical, and cultural conditions of language use (John-Steiner, Panofsky, Smith, 1994, 35). Overall it would appear that culture is concerned with the production and exchange of meanings (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, 12). We live in, carry, and wear our body of culture as the extrinsic representation of stored knowledge, senses, and memory from which we construct an embodied meaning in the learning of language. Vygotsky's innovative process of internalization exemplifies how the transfer of cultural knowledge is how we share meaning as "the language of another becomes our own when we speak to ourselves as others first spoke to us" (Litowitz, 1993, 188). It is when there is mutual understanding that the sounds exchanged between people acquire meaning, thereby becoming words or concepts. In the absence of mutual understanding, this group of sounds can not bear meaning, and no concepts can appear[28] (Vygotsky, 1986, 101). Concepts offer the ability to self-sufficiently direct one's own mental processes through the use of words or signs (108). This gives the words used a subjectivity which reflects its identity. Getting back to its most fundamental dimension, the word is a sign, a tool of human mutual understanding (100). What or how we attribute meaning to a word is dependent on how we perceive its function and how we conceptualize its purpose (I would venture to add, its cultural

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[28] Concept formation is a highly complex function of intellectual activity of which I merely allude to in the context of this thesis research.

significance too). To a child a word is a property of an object rather than the symbol of the object (92). In learning to speak and in development of speech, children remain unaware of the symbolic role of language as a conduit to and for meaning. Therefore words act as simple attributes for things (Vygotsky, 1986, 93). According to psychological sequences, the meaning of every word is bound by a concept or otherwise referred to as a generalization[29] (Vygotsky, 1986, 212). We cannot change social generalizations or concepts liaised to language, we cannot pretend they don't exist and we cannot overlook that they are a necessary component for social integration. Vygotsky distinguished two basic forms of experience that further divide into two different, yet interrelated groups, which constitute a concept: the "scientific" and the "spontaneous". The highly structured, logically defined and specialized activity of classroom instruction define scientific concepts, where those spontaneous emerge from one's own reflection on everyday experience (Vygotsky, 1987, xxxiii). Spontaneous concepts work "upward" toward greater abstractness while scientific concepts work in their "downward" development toward greater concreteness (xxxiv). Vygotsky's experiments[30] illuminated that abstract thought is a necessary basis for concrete thought (Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1994, 248). Word meaning is a phenomenon of thought only insofar as thought is embodied in speech (Vygotsky, 1986, 212). Further, Vygotsky believed that direct teaching of concepts was impossible and fruitless leading to nothing but empty verbalism and parrot-like repetition of words (Vygotsky, 1986, 150). He demonstrated this through

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[29] Every word is a concealed *generalization*...generalization is a *verbal act of thought*: its reflection of reality differs radically from that of immediate sensation or perception. Vygotsky, 1987, 47.

[30] Studies established that mentally retarded children were not very capable with abstract thinking. It turned out that a teaching system based solely on concreteness – one that eliminated from teaching everything associated with abstract thinking – not only failed to help retarded children overcome their innate handicaps but also reinforced their handicaps by accustoming children exclusively to concrete thinking and thus suppressing the rudiments of any abstract thought that such children still have. *Mind in Society*, L.S. Vygotsky, 1978, 89.

an example of Leo Tolstoy's attempts to teach literary language to peasant children:

> It is not a word, that is difficult to comprehend, but the concept denoted by this word, which the child does not understand. The word is almost always at hand when the concept is ready (Tolstoy, 1903,143)

Mere explanation of a word leads to another equally incomprehensible word, or a whole series of words, with the connection between them as incomprehensible as the original word itself (Vygotsky, 1986, 150). Unraveling this phenomena led Vygotsky to a further deconstruction of language as several of his contemporary's (notably Piaget, Stern) were conducting similar studies observing the 'child-talk' language invented by children accompanied by gesture and mimicry as a mediating step in the defining of word meaning. This was an extension of the zoological studies (by Kohler and Yerkes) which were all the rage in the early part of the Twentieth Century being conducted on apes and chimpanzees:

> In the languages of primitive peoples, gestures are used along with sound, and play a substantial role...for instance, the sign language of deaf-mutes and lip reading, which is also interpretation of movement (Levy-Bruhl, 1918).

GESTURE AND MEDIATION

Gestures are an affective form of expression (Vygotsky, 1986, 2). They offer emphasis and dimension to spoken language. Contemporary gesture and language researchers who have paraphrased Vygotsky's early findings go as far as to consider gestures as *"material carriers"* for thinking (McNeill and Duncan, 2000, 155 original italics). Professor James Lantolf of Pennsylvania State University, a leading scholar in Vygotskian study, discusses a complex corporeal syntax of gesturing that populates our culture. These include: lexical gestures, the indicatory gesture, the iconic, illustrative, metaphoric, emblematic, manner, goal-directed, and performative gestures to name but a

few.

Just as in speaking "a gesture has to be seen by someone else and has to communicate some piece of information to them" in order for it to resonate as a gesture (Morris, 2002, 21). Gesturing is considered to be the most fundamental communication system to humans (Wagner, 2002, 11). Non reliant on verbal exchange, its pliancy offers a new area of research to the learning of language as it focuses more on the appropriation and usage of gestures as the predominant form of mediation (Lantolf, 2006, 75). A classically comprehensible example of this is Vygotsky's developmental breakdown of the child who gestures a point or a grab toward an object placed out of reach. At this stage, the object is nothing but a movement toward what is wanted, cannot attain, and nothing more. This could be considered an artefact as the extended forefinger indication gives meaning to the object on the physical plane. When an adult notices and assists the child in reaching to that which they are pointing, the gesture for self is replaced by gesture for others. To the infant unable to speak, recognition of this understanding brings about a (self) consciousness of intent – theirs and others. The pointing mediated gesture travels from an object oriented (tool) movement and becomes a movement aimed at/for another person (sign), as a means of establishing relations i.e., communication (Vygotsky, 1978, 56). The complex mediating role of gesture for a child incapable of speech and language, communicates a myriad of intentions:

> The childish *mama*, translated into advanced speech, does not mean the word 'mother but rather a sentence such as 'Mama, come here,' or 'Mama, give me,' or 'Mama, put me in the chair 'or' Mama, help me' (C. and W. Stern, 1928, 180 original italics).

When the mother reacts, the gesture "in-itself" becomes gesture "for-others" and a consciousness ensues, therefore transforming (for the child) into a "gesture-for-oneself"

and a process for learning occurs (Vygotsky, 1987, xxvii). Hence, what starts out as a

random movement ends up a precise symbol (Wagner, 2002, 11). These two basic

examples demonstrate how subtly we assimilate gestures and their repercussive effects

that emphasize and support language and speech structure. When mother gives meaning

to the communication of the child when that child is unable to do so for itself, she is

working in the child's ZPD.

Preverbal to Verbal

Another form of silent speech comes from what Vygotsky called "gestures that

have been fixed" (Vygotsky, 1978, 107). He equated fixed, indicatory pencil markings,

otherwise known as drawings or written signs, of the written word as signs of visual

gestures or "writings in the air" (107). He hypothesized that young children need a visual

reference first, before they can decide what it represents and how to title it. This raises an

association between the act of seeing and the making of meaning.

In infancy speech follows physical behaviour which is provoked by and

dominated through activity:

> Our first experiences both before and after birth were centered in our bodies. As
> a newborn, we knew when we were hungry, dry, comfortable, held in strong and
> calm arms. Even then, we were aware of language – not as a system that encodes
> meanings, but as a phenomenon of consummate interest. As an infant, every part of
> our body was engaged... (Culham, 2002, 98).

Vygotsky's analysis of early developmental stages between actions to speech

demonstrates that "children acquire independence with respect to their concrete

surroundings" which shape the future understandings as adults (Vygotsky, 1978, 28). The

informative stimuli of their expansive "visual field" connects or sets the stage on which

to build cognitive and communicative functions of language (Kohler, 1925). In essence,

according to Vygotsky, they feed and inform one another. In later stages of growth, this structural relation shifts and "speech moves more and more toward the starting point of the process, so that it eventually comes to *precede* action" (Vygotsky, 1978, 28 original italics). Nonetheless it is worthwhile to note Vygtosky's view that child behavioural development is in direct relation to that which had been used in relation to another person. He believed children organize their own activities according to the social form of behaviour to succeed in applying a social attitude to themselves (27). The formation of new functional learning systems can be likened to nourishment needed for body growth, wherein certain required nutrients are digested and assimilated while others are rejected (Vygotsky, 1978, 125).

Symbolic Play

The block that turns into an airplane or rocket or the bundled pile of clothes that becomes a baby or the broomstick that designates a horse all represent a very complex system of gestural speech through symbolic play which communicates and signifies the meaning of the transformed object (Wagner, 2002, 11;Vygotsky, 1978, 108). It is through the basis of these indicatory gestures that playthings begin and gradually acquire their meaning (108). Vygotsky wrote prolifically on children's intuitive pre-speech process in relation to the construction of meaning and making sense of the world through the use of gestures as a form of communication. He perceived "a close connection between gesture and symbolic play in children" (Lantolf, 2007, 76). Yet he did not conceive the notion of play symbolism in the traditional sense, that is to say that Vygotsky did not believe play to be merely a system of signs for the child to demonstrate symbolic action (Vygotsky, 1978, 94). He argued that a child unfamiliar with the necessities of symbolic action (e.g.

meaning, context, concept or sense) could not readily have the capability to depict or

engage in them beyond their one dimension (94). Vygotsky even considered the notion of

play as an activity of pleasure, an inaccurate misconception on both accounts (i.e. it is

neither an activity nor always pleasurable). Play to Vygotsky superseded development

of intellectual function to focus more on the realization of needs which are connected by

the ever more powerful drive of motives, inclinations and incentives, he explains:

> It is my belief that if needs that could not be realized immediately did not develop
> during the school years, there would be no play, because play seems to be invented
> at the point when the child begins to experience unrealizable tendencies…to
> resolve this tension the (preschool) child enters an imaginary, illusory world in
> which the unrealizable desires can be realized, and this world is called play…the
> old adage that child's play is imagination in action must be reversed: we can say
> that imagination in adolescents and school children is play without action. (93)

In *Mind in Society* (1978), Vygotsky dedicates a chapter to the role of play in

development by illustrating how in childhood playacting what passes unnoticed by the

child in quotidian life become rules of behaviour in play (95). Vygotsky exemplifies this

in a case where two sisters aged five and seven play at "playing sisters".[31] They behave

as sisters without thinking, where during play the children begin to think and

consequently act how and what a sister should be. Thus, the imaginary situation of play

designs rules of action and meaning (95). These rules are not formulated in advance and

do not change during the course of the play but result directly from the imaginary

situations created in playing. Through imitating behaviours of their 'real' life, Vygotsky

concludes his observations by articulating: "the fact that the two sisters decided to play

sisters induced them both to acquire rules of behaviour" (Vygotsky, 1978, 95). In this

sense, expressive play explored nuanced aspects of their individual identity and relations

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[31] J.Sully, Studies of Childhood. Translated from Russian 1904, 48.

with one another while simultaneously expanding dimensions of symbolic action

repertoire for the making of new meaning.

Imitation

> "To understand another's speech, it is not sufficient to understand his words – we
> must understand his thought. But even that is not enough – we must also know its
> motivation" (Vygotsky, 1986, 253).

Cross-cultural studies on psychological investigations of speech and gesture tell

us that "as one learns the languages or the dialect of the (new) group one belongs to, one

reproduces the gestures, the facial movements, and the bodily expression typical of this

group (Feyereisen and de Lannoy, 1991, 6). Language has "speech genres" such as

"military commands, everyday greetings, farewells, congratulations... the genres of table

conversation and intimate conversation among friends...typical forms or types of

utterances" (Werstch, Tulviste and Hagstrom, 1993, 345). Research has uncovered that

children learn how to "ventriloquate" these genres in order to function successfully in our

given socio-cultural circumstance (345). Beneficial to a new learner, ventriloquism acts

as a mediational means for broad, efficient communication and thought inherently

situated with regard to cultural, historical, and institutional context (346). This offers an

interesting *point d'appui* to my research. In reviewing Vygotsky's extensive work, an

equivalency for language ventriloquism could most effectively be the role of the gesture

in the form of corporeal miming as imitative ventriloquism. Here an optical awareness

and dependency of visual comprehensiveness become the critical sensory for non-verbal

communication in the backdrop of the new "verbal environment" (Vygotsky, 1987, 74-5;

Vygotsky, 1987,101).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summarizing the three major aspects covered in this chapter, socio-cultural

theory, zone of proximal development, and semiotic mediation, I would like to reiterate

that I have merely scratched the surface of Vgotsky's extensive knowledge of highly

intricate theories in the functioning's of the human mind. Most of the information

found in this chapter came from two thorough sources of his major writings: *Thought and*

Language (1934/1986) and *Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological*

processes[32](1978). What is of essential interest to my research is Vygotsky's theories that

demonstrate two elements to being human, the individual and the social. All three areas

covered in this chapter succinctly defend his socio-cultural external to internal/inter to

intrapersonal processes of individual human situatedness, with emphasis on dialogic

relationship between interactants. The mere act of interaction assists in qualitatively

transforming whatever bit of knowledge we started with, thereby developing higher

mental function (Nicholl, 1998). What we learn depends on the psychological tools

available to us and those tools available depend upon the culture we live in, the resources

we receive to navigate our capacity for development. As our thoughts, our actions, and

experiences of our individual contextedness and situatedness are culturally mediated, we

can never be the Other, but we can use the Other to help us negotiate (dialogic)

meanings:

> I need you (Other) to help me define me, and you need me (Other) to help define
> you. And we both need each other to help define and say what we see in the world
> outside of each of our selves, for the self—other—world relationships are defined

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[32] "Myshlenie I rech" was published in Russian in 1934, a few months after Vygotsky's death, it was reprinted in 1956 and 1982. It appeared in English as *Thought and Language*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press in 1962. (and an alternative translation of the same works in 1987 titled *Thinking and Speaking*). In the United States, *Mind in Society : The development of higher psychological processes* is a full compilation and publication of Vygotsky's works, published in 1978.

culturally for us by ourselves and others, through social networks (Smith in John-Steiner, Panofsky, Smith, 1994, 37).

In the next chapter I unite Jacques Lecoq's work with Lev Vygotsky's theories

to lay groundwork for integrating the body to English language learning curricula.

Chapter Four: INTEGRATING MOVEMENT INTO THE MAKING OF MEANING

4.1 Lecoq as creative learning for ELL

Pedagogy is highly influenced by the complex social relations among teachers, students, school culture, and the larger social world. What better laboratory for exploration of self through the relationship between cultures than the socio-cultural microcosm of the high school, in the pivotal space of the English language learning classroom. Drawing from Eilean Hooper-Greenhill's[33] (2007) notions of reviewing, reshaping and renegotiating education in cultural change, this chapter unites the theories of the previous two sections in an effort to address logistical 'questions' of integrating movement to the making of meaning in high school ELL curricula. In newcomer integration shifting focus from the cognitive inclusiveness of language learning to the subtle nuances of alternative stimuli found in the language of the body draws from a learning of "things remembered and felt" (Alberti, 2007, 387). An embodied approach based on Jacques Lecoq's pedagogy offers language learning a deeper exploration which inconspicuously engage self-motivating strategies for discovery of identity. Empowering ELL students' by enriching curriculum addresses existing (covert) issues of integration, new culture, and difference which inevitably find their way into the classroom. "Identity, meaning and self-determination are key issues in the making of a powerful sense of an active self", where the goal is to enable refugee youths with the utmost opportunities to succeed in the process of learning (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007, 372).

Bisecting the product of art from the process of art delineates two very distinct

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[33] Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, Education, Postmodernity and the Museum, chapter 28, pp 367-376. In Knell, Macleod, Watson (eds.) *Museum Revolutions.* London: Routledge, 2007.

aspects of Jacques Lecoq's pedagogy relinquishing the performative aspect in the ELL classroom instead to focus a learning on awareness of self using his (modified) sensorial/kinesthetic exercises for actor training. Building from the resources of students lives, the objective of a Lecoquian adjunct is to create a place in curriculum where the body space and the classroom/world space are invoked by imagination and creativity to assist in the issues of settlement (Duncum and Springgay, 2007, 1146). For the newcomer refugee beginning a process of integration, a Lecoquian focussed learning could provide a powerful bridge to mine a larger experiential sense of being when applied to the discoveries that accompany the learning of English language. This new linguistic space is located in the in-between which separates the there/then country of origin and the here/now new country experience (Gadsden 2008, 31; Fels and McGivern, 2002, 28).

> If the experience of knowledge in the making is also the experience of our selves in the making, then there is no self who pre-exists a learning experience. Rather, the "self" is what emerges from the learning experience...To think of pedagogy in relation to knowledge in the making rather than to knowledge as a thing made is to think of something that cannot be easily captured in language. When my self and what I know are simultaneously in the making, my body/brain/mind is participating in an event that exists outside the realm of language. As a non-linguistic event, the experience of knowledge and self as simultaneously in the making can even be said to pre-exist cognition (Ellsworth, 2006, 2).

As an aid for learning, applying Lecoq's theatre exercises to the English language classroom may elicit similar outcomes as that of Drama ESL curriculum, such as the enhancement of oral skills, building of confidence, inspiring imaginative thinking, group work, role play, interpretation of new language gestures and non-verbal communication, providing a safe environment to rehearse the new language, recreation of situational "real-life" scenarios, and the likes thereof (McCafferty, 2000, 192-203; Culham, 2007; Davies, 1990, 97). While all are necessary and valid integrative ways to deepen learning,

reflection and self awareness in individual students, that is not the sole intent of this proposed research. Lecoq's pedagogy has the same goal as that of cognition – to understand, to gain a larger perspective on, and to engage more profoundly with the world through the body (Wagner, 2002, 15). Incorporating aesthetics into the education of language learning takes pedagogy beyond traditional cognitive frameworks to include the exploration of expressive sensorial/embodied pedagogy which assists, promotes and, enhances a *living* of cross-culture awareness (Lindholm, 1994, 189).

Looking to Culture and Circumstance

> we are not isolated subjectivities trapped within our bodies, but share an intersubjective milieu with others, we must also specify that a somatic mode of attention means not only attention to and with one's own body, but includes attention to the bodies of others. Our concern is the cultural elaboration of sensory engagement, not preoccupation with one's own body as an isolated phenomenon. (Csordas, 1993)

Our cultural differences are our unique asset and they are "the ties that bind us" (Orlowski, 2001, 250). They act as a "creative interconnection" by which we share meaning through our individual ethnicities (Golding, 2007, 315). Re-framing the theatrical in the ELL classroom is a learning that focuses on teaching identity issues through the exchange of cultural experiences by intentionally broaching the difficult political terrain of diaspora and difference (Oddey, 2007;Brinkler Gabler,1991, 8; Hooper-Greenhill, 2006, 362). In this classroom, "*their* culture should not be interpreted based on an orientation towards one's *own* culture, nor should it be experienced in terms such as "similar to" or "just like" (Adorno, 1984, 185 original italics). Incorporating movement to language learning deemphasizes the comparison factor and generalizations of "visual identities", of social skin, that define boundaries between self and 'Other', to

instead overtly direct instruction to addresses students' cultures *for* the process of their continuous im/migrating construction (Hyland and King 2006, 1; Ahmed & Stacey 2001; Brinkler-Gabler, 1995, 8).

> Only when this happens can languages of ex/change emerge, in a "listening to" and "speaking to" each other that invites response/ibility without reducing differences between others, and from which new conceptions of communal and political spaces can develop (8).

Engaging refugee youth as the active interpreters and performers of meaning making practices within the complexity of the classroom community can assist in counterbalancing feelings of marginalization. Instrumentally in the most obvious capacity, providing a space offers a place to unleash varying degrees of newcomer circumstance in the form of social-emotional/ socio-cultural adjustments, psychological distress, transitional conflicts (adultification), educational (learning) issues, sense of loss, uproot, migration trauma to name but an obvious few (Lacroix, 2004). These very real background factors often impact the context in which refugees live, inevitably spilling into their settlement process with potential repercussions for their learning of language[34]. A sensorial-kinesthetic addition to ELL looks to those very 'circumstances' for source material or 'themes' from which to draw from. There is no denying that the "risky invocations of emotions" will be stirred (Boler, 1999, 109). Etymologically, the word emotion means "setting in motion" (Lecoq 2000, 47). Movement provokes emotion (Murray, 2003, 129). Rooted in movement, Lecoq's work directs the student away from a cognitive, verbal, interpretative 'telling' and instead moves them toward showing through the experience of physical awareness (Frost and Yarrow, 2007,

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[34] Explained in greater detail as per interviews conducted with a ELL educator and leading scholar in language and literacy in the chapter 5 of this thesis study.

147; Murray, 2003,129). The abstractness of processing or of a learning to understand

through the body is a unique catharsis that doesn't necessarily resonate or equate with

rational, procedural processes as in that of thinking, sometimes without explainable

results either. Shoshana Felman succinctly speaks of body knowledge in *Speech, Bodies*

and Performativity (2002). She writes:

> The body gives rise to language, and that language carries bodily aims, and
> performs bodily deeds that are not always understood by those who use language to
> accomplish certain conscious aims.

Stanton B. Garner Jr. (2007) investigates "the body as the experiential

center" (119). Reframing Jacques Lecoq's theatre pedagogy to assist with language

development draws exactly from the experiential and considers the unique needs of each

youth's mind, body and spirit and is not limited or based on their language capacity and

or efficiency. As an alternative sensorial/embodied perspective in a socio-academic

framework,[35] the experiential component of a movement pedagogy encourages refugee

youth to discover for him/herself what the new culture asks of him/her in relation to the

self/social adjustments required of the new cultural knowledge (DeVillar and Faltis,

1994, 1).

4.2 Language, Words, Speech

A non-verbal, movement based component to the English language learning

classroom is a paradox. Yet, both Lecoq and Vygotsky adhered to the notion that

language acquisition is not just about the mastery of vocabulary and grammar, it becomes

a way to engage in one's community and surroundings. Similarly each of their

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[35]The socioacademic framework is in theoretical alignment with Vygotsky's notion that classroom learning is first and foremost a social event mediated through communication between the students and teacher, and among students as they converse with more capable peers. Christian J Faltis and Robert A. DeVillar. Reconciling Cultural Diversity and Quality Schooling: Paradigmatic Elements of a Socioacademic Framework in *Cultural Diversity in Schools: From Rhetoric to Practice*.1994, 8.

pedagogical analyses converge to suggest individual consciousness and behaviour both

develop through relations with others in the social environment (Vygotsky, 1987, xxiv).

> What is language but sound produced on the breath by the complex action of the tongue, palate, larynx, and glottal mechanism to create aural symbols that have meaning in a particular language community? Indeed, communities are defined in large part by the language they share, a language that inevitably embodies a culture, an ethos, and a worldview. (Wagner, 2002,3)

In the society of the new country, experiencing integration through sensing

identity for a moving body language re-directs learning so that refugee youth *sense*

themselves in the acquisition of new language and all the learning and developmental

stages that entails. It speaks to active engagement of self-integration; for just as

perceptions are subjective, so too are the personal stories and circumstances of refugee

youths and what they can individually contribute to their integration.

Why Words?

A key aspect of Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory that lends itself to embodied

learning is the notion that what is perceived through the eyes is communicated to the self,

which then translates through inner speech (to make sense of meaning through speech for

self and not for others), to externally reappear in varying capacities of individual

comprehension and/for social display. The shape, tone, order and allotment of words

become the manifestation of intimate thoughts interpreted in linguistic form (Kozulin,

1987, xxxviii). There is no disputing that sharing a common language is a necessity for

social inclusion. Quite simply, its basic purpose is a communicative one, where learning

to communicate is a collaborative affair (Wells, 1981,15). Vygotsky's intellectual

analysis of word-to-thought-to-speech is where my research diverges from his

psychological theories and critical contributions to the social sciences; however, many of

his observations appropriately support an alternative addition to language learning.

> Language alone does not make meaning: it is used to invoke a whole range of shared knowledge and experience between speakers, from aspects of a joint physical activity, to past conversations together, to shared cultural values. Thus the very aspects of talk that might be seen as incoherent are in fact an important part of the way talk is used to bind people together and to enable them to negotiate shared understandings about the world (Maybin and Mercer, 1996).

Director Eugenio Barba of the Odin Teatret and of the International School of Theatre Anthropology in Denmark observes that "the body is the visible part of the voice and one can see how and where the impulse which will become sound and speech is born" (Barba,1985, 53). This corroborates Vygotsky's definition that "the sense of a word is the sum of all the psychological events aroused in a person's consciousness by the word", albeit communicated in an embodied form (Kozulin, 1986, xxxvii).Vygotsky's work behind the mechanics of speech paralleled words to a mold that gives shape to structure (Vygotsky, 1978, 28). His belief in the power of and dependence on words provides opportunities to "shape an activity into a structure and that structure may be changed or reshaped when children learn to use language in ways that allow them to go beyond previous experiences when planning future action" (28). In the ZPD, adjoining an embodied learning component to new language learning reshapes traditional, cognitive, structural methods by placing the focus on the movement of words as per Lecoq's pedagogy. Introducing a kinaesthetic component to the learning of words involves an abstract physical exploration to English language grammar. For example, how might a certain word feel through physical expression? What is the rhythm and energy of words like anger, loss or joy? How can the body descriptively demonstrate these words? Which is not to confuse a linear, human portrayal of the emotional meaning behind these words. To embody does not ask for the human in anger or loss or joy, the beating of fists and

stamping of feet for anger, the head shaking mournful grieving of loss, or exuberant jumping as in that of joy. An embodied technique investigates abstract interpretations through movement of the body in words. We make general interpretations of that which appears a dangerous situation or understand one of gentle love through the gestures of the body by what we see, and the tone or vocal level of the unfamiliar language, which are ultimately merely sounds that we hear. When an understanding begins in the body, the learner is free to creatively interpret, drawing from subjective associations to express new words outside of (conceptual) generalizations, detached from generic context. This connects the learners' relationship to words or language, and situates their level of comprehension and development (in their ZPD). Once this is established, the next step is to move beyond corporeal abstraction of words, by applying human characteristics, and the personification of the new language. For instance, an improvisation exercise where 'anger' meets 'joy'. How do they walk? How do they interact? What sounds do they make? These questions evolve to what words/dialogue/text they might exchange (apart from 'I'm angry', 'I'm joyous'), thereby scaffolding steps all in an effort to lead the refugee learner to the necessary subsequent section.

Why Speak?

Investigating the specifics of language learning, "we communicate with some end in mind, some function to be fulfilled" (Bruner, 1983, 36). To the newcomer, it is typically an expedient concern that drives the motivating factor in the learning. What presents very real dilemmas for the academically compromised, the socio-economic impoverished, or new culture marginalized refugee youth is the:

>Focus on form at the expense of function...stressing...reading or usage of grammar and spelling in written language. These methods teach students to value the form of their work at the expense of its content. (John-Steiner, Panofsky, Smith, 1994, 7)

Even before Hamlet[36] recites his piece, the actor having embodied his being works in complicity with the playing space. This deepens, validates, and confirms characterization to allow for audience suspension of disbelief. It is not the words alone that bring the portrayal to life, but the physical manner in which Hamlet is portrayed that engages us through the movement from silence to sound (Bennett, 2006, 267). Through the private and social masks we wear, it is not always apparent to read another, especially when the things people say and their physical behaviour while saying them do not always fit together (16). Add to this, misunderstandings that can accompany foreign language interaction or the misinterpretations of culturally accepted and or forbidden gestures. For the young newcomer, facilitating means with which to internalize the new external information relies on developing awareness of self in the new space. This in turn, tunes them into the body language of their self-expression from which to observe and frame the larger community body language and new social-expression.

The Body Learns

It is a well known fact that with adolescence comes many physical and psychological changes. In adolescent maturation, the student is already struggling with identity of body-change, self-image, social situations. They are neither children nor adults, just "an in-between" (Courtney, 1980, 56). Imagine the added dimension of separation, loss, or knowledge of horrific and devastating acts that can burden refugee

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[36] Early in his career, an innovative interpretation of Hamlet produced in Moscow by Gordon Craig at Stanislavski's Art Theatre fascinated the young Vygotsky so much that he wrote an literary critique in the form of an essay which later became an integral part of his first large research project *The Psychology of Art* (1925). Eventually it was presented as his Ph.D thesis at the Moscow Institute of Psychology.

youths. The five areas outlined in the Lecoq chapter (space, movement, neutral

mask, sensory emotion, body of words) aim to study the body as a site of knowing,

perceiving and experiencing new space as two different though goal-oriented

approaches to make "meaning" for refugee youth.

It has been my experience as an artist-educator working with newly arrived,

uprooted youths that they speak of home as a place they continue to live in their

memories. Equally, and not surprisingly, their identity remains tied to that of their pre-

arrival. They hover in a space of limbo. Human beings construe space through the lived

body (Tuan, 1977, 35). When a space becomes familiar to us, it becomes a place for us

where the interpretation of the place in the new space is enhanced by our experiences

(73).

> The body learns by adapting itself to the effort required by a given gesture.
> When repeated, any gesture becomes selective; eliminating whatever is
> superfluous...dynamics of gesture and movement appear as universal because they
> are organically inscribed within our bodies and belong to the laws of gravity.
> Gradually, they are shaped, transposed, deviated, hidden or opposed by education
> or by tactical or diplomatic considerations which are peculiar to each individual, to
> each country or to each historical period (Bradby, 2006, 8).

Sociologist Alfred Schultz wrote "our bodies always participate in the everyday

world" [37] where the outer space inevitably reflects the inner space. Prior to their arrival,

the space of the refugee is often one of insecurity, fear, danger, and imminent emergency

(Nyers, 2006, 97). In contrast, Canada is the secure and protected place defined by

citizenship (97). Those who pass the citizenship test of entry, are initiated into a set

of rules of which the most prominent defining feature is to share certain, specific criteria

of the new socially organized space (Ardener, 1981, 12). As the body has an innate sense

of truth, it provides a wealth of resource from accrued life knowledge from which to help

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[37] From "Symbol, Reality, and Society," Schutz, *Collected Papers*, 1: 294.

transition in the space of the new country (Hagen, 1973, 52). The new environment inevitably imposes certain restraints, physical, emotional, logistical, practical, in nature that in turn shape perceptions and ones capacities within that space (12). The overwhelmed space measures in the form of a function of time as in how long before I can go home? Or how long does it take to know a place, how long will it take to speak the language, and consequently how long will the place allow for those to occur (Tuan, 1977,179). This as a directional movement in space, points toward a goal, where the goal is both a point in time and a point in space; as in the goal of the newcomer's future aspiration (plans), and the ultimate destination to find a place both in both the microcosm of school culture and society at large (179).

My research directs attention to the space of integration in the mandatory, ministry regulated system of education. The unfortunate situations of these young people can be covertly addressed using a sensorial-movement-based dimension, engaging an all inclusive approach of integrating self into the new space where refugee youth are encouraged to be an instrumental part in shaping new cultural influences of being Canadian. Connecting them with their own 'repertoire' of physical vocabulary (i.e. facial expressions, touch, posture, idiosyncrasies, cultural movement) acknowledges their presence in the new space amidst that of the new cultural gestures and language (James, 1995,2).

4.3 Contemporary Vygotskian teaching strategies for the ELL classroom

In an effort to unite an embodied Lecoquian component to English language learning, I look to aspects of three contemporary learning concepts influenced by Vygotsky:

1. Activity Theory
2. Scaffolding
3. Social Constructivism

1. Activity Theory: When Vygotsky died a few years shy of his fortieth birthday, he was merely scratching the surface of his findings and writings. A group of colleagues and students expanded his research and founded Activity Theory (AT) thereby further developing his theories (Lantolf and Appel, 1994, 16). The explanatory framework behind AT consists of activity, action and operation. All are situated in specific settings[38] or context based on a set of assumed appropriate roles, goals, and means to be used by the participants in that setting (17). Activity is driven by the concept of motive, "because without motive there can be no activity" (Leont'ev, 1981, 59). Activities are always directed towards some goal or subgoal which engages objective purpose or action (Lantolf and Appel, 1994, 19). "Without an object toward which it is directed, an activity is "devoid of sense" (Leont'ev, 1981, 48). Lastly, operation is determined by the physical and mental means that an action carried out (20). All three are inextricably linked. Although AT moved away from Vygotsky's theory that a socio-cultural motor drives higher forms of consciousness, it does supply practical steps to offer the constructs of situating embodied learning. For example, "the motive answers why something is done, the level of goals answers what is done, and the level of operations answers how it is done" (Lantolf and Appel, 1994, 21).

2. Scaffolding: The visual image of the traditional definition for scaffolding[39], "a temporary framework that supports workers and materials until a building is constructed

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[38] Setting...does not mean the physical or perceptual context in which humans function; rather it refers to the sociocultural interpretation or creation that is imposed on the context by the participants. Wertsch, 1985b pp. 203, 212.
[39] The concept of *scaffolding* stems from the work of American psychologist Jerome Bruner and colleagues based on Lev Vygotsky's zone of proximal development... Encyclopedia of Semiotics, Paul Bouissac (Ed.), Oxford University.

or repaired to stand on its own" is what resonates most with the collectivity required of

Lecoquian-influenced learning (Salkind, 2008, 863). Also, the metaphorical usage of

the terms "upgrade" and "dismantle" which are pertinent to the scaffolding structure and

are also reflective of a student's errors, limits or progress. By renegotiating the embodied

learning scaffold, newcomer refugee students work in groups to construct a *collective*

scaffold (Donato 1994, 41-46 original italics). Here, as individuals they are novices,

but collectively they become experts as they provide orientation for one another to, as a

unit, co-construct language and culture tasks that in turn reduce the distance between

their individual abilities. The focus becomes an expression of their collective spontaneous

concepts rooted in practical experience in which collections of complementary things

form a set or a whole (Vygotsky, 1987, 115).

3. Social Constructivism: A constructivist approach demonstrates that as students

solve problems, they discover the consequences of their actions through reflection of past

and present experiences that constructs their own interpretation of understanding.

Learning is therefore an active, conscious process that requires a change in the learner,

for constructivist theory believes that people only deeply understand what they have

constructed (Guthrie, 2003, 1463). Therefore models or hypotheses about how the world

works moves beyond an accumulation of cerebrally retained knowledge, but is put into

practice through "the dialogue with the culture in which they live" (Wagner, 2002, 9).

Vygotsky conceptualized "the need to develop self-regulated learners who can direct and

manage their own learning and thinking" (Guthrie, 2003, 2658-9).

An embodied focus in the language learning classroom combines the three

stimuli of (AT) activity, action and operation embedded in a collective scaffold that

makes available higher mental function stimulus as per Vygotsky's semiotic, artifact-mediated and object-oriented socio-cultural theory. Vygotsky believed that all human action finds its origins in reactions to stimuli present in the external world. These engage the reception of stimulus, the processing of the stimulus followed by the response to the stimulus (Van Der Veer and Valsiner, 1993, 52). In "higher forms of human behaviour, the individual actively modifies the stimulus situation as a part of the process of responding to it" (Vygotsky,1978, 14). Behaviour is therefore controlled by a series of stimuli, but it is the series of stimuli that are activated by the behaviour.

> ...the student's personal experience becomes the fundamental basis of pedagogical work. Strictly speaking, and from the scientific point of view, there is no other way of teaching...Ultimately; the child teaches himself...in the educational process, the student's individual experience is everything. Education should be structured so that it is not that the student is educated, but that the student educates himself...The educational process must be based on the student's personal activity... (Vygotsky, 1997, xxiii)

4.3.1. Drawing on Personal Theatre Work/Auto-Cours[40]

Remarkably Lecoq's *auto-cours* incorporate all of Vygotsky's influential contemporary learning concepts: activity theory, scaffolding and social constructivism. Literally translated *auto-cours* means 'self-lesson', meaning a lesson where students work collectively without teachers (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, 29). Lecoq devised this component to the school's weekly teaching schedule where an hour and a half at the end of each day is reserved for students to work together on a given theme. The task is to have students incorporate what is being taught from the regular class sessions at whatever degree of comprehension to display in whatever shape or form it has developed to the

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[40] During the 1968 student uprisings in Paris, students proposed the idea that they might teach themselves and Lecoq introduced the practice of *auto-cours*. This was a period of time in which groups of students collectively explored their own response to the week's work by devising a short piece of theatre to be presented before Jacques and the class. The growth of this idea took such a strong root that it remained central to his conception of the imaginative development and individual responsibility of the theatre artist.
Simon McBurney, 2000. In Jacques Lecoq *The Moving Body*, ix.

teaching staff and other students by the end of the week. This key element in the school's

curriculum is an ingenious piece of pedagogy that effectively empowers the student by

giving him/her license to interpret and process what was formally taught to them. This is

a classic Lecoquian trade mark that best exemplifies his reputed "think-on-your-feet-

theatre" style (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002). I must emphasize there is no text-book

learning at Lecoq's school. There are no half-answers or ambiguities vis-à-vis the lessons

taught. The lessons are all about physical comprehension. In the grandiloquence of *la*

grande salle (a large gymnasium-like space where the *auto-cours* are presented), it is

very unlikely that something misunderstood will go unnoticed. As an alumnus of the

school, my memories of the *auto-cours* sessions were of those when I gained the most

clarity. All lessons at the School are taught in French. Most students arrive in first year

with minimal to adequate comprehension of the language. For many, the time spent in

our individual groups, also became a time to make sense of what had been taught in the

other language. This is not to assume that everyone spoke English either. The sensorial-

kinesthetic lessons of our actor training in essence became the tools from which to inform

our day to day interactions with one another. Given the diverse cultures present at the

school and challenges of communication across different languages, the group session

work serves a practical dual-purpose. Working together with very real objectives of *auto-*

cours presentation at stake, had a way of speeding up the getting to know one another

process and all the polite niceties that go with it. Over time an economy of gestural

short-hand naturally found its way into these sessions. Maintaining a focus on work[41]

combined with a healthy dose of peer pressure, completely overshadowed feelings of

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[41] The objective each week was to create and perform a scene complete with story arc beginning, middle, end parameters, defining characterization, appropriate timing, rhythm, and of course, incorporating a noticeable dosage of the week's lessons.

inadequacy keeping us focused on the need to accomplish the task at hand. As you take and give of yourself, there is no way that being anything less than one's best in the space would go unnoticed.

> The school is a place of struggle, of tension and crises, out of which creativity is sometimes stimulated...auto-cours quite rapidly leads to the emergence of different roles in the creative process: students discover strengths as directors, authors, actors. The person who becomes powerful in the group is not necessarily the one who most wanted to take the lead; sometimes an unassuming personality reveals a powerful presence and is, in effect, singled out by his colleagues. All such internal group dynamics emerge in the course of this type of work (Lecoq, 2000, 93-4).

Artist Educator Experience

During my five years (2000-2005) as an Artist Educator with the Ontario Arts Council's (OAC) *Arts in Education Theatre Program*, I modified an aspect of Jacques Lecoq's improvisation exercises where drawing from realistic experiences of everyday life he would attribute a broad word to denote the direction or theme of the improv. For example "much of life is spent waiting" at the doctor's, a line at the post office, here Lecoq would give the improv the theme word of 'waiting' (Lecoq, 2000, 31). 'Waiting' would serve as the central focus from which to build the improvisation. Two of Lecoq's very powerful themes entitled 'The Return' and 'The Departure' have demonstrated a deep resonance in particular in with my experiences in working with newcomer students. Teaching silent improvisatory play to the culturally diverse students of Toronto high schools, I tweaked the exercise to include the title 'The Arrival'. As all of the work is group-based, it provides a way for students to get a better sense of each other's personal journey, physically and or emotionally, as they collectively share bits of information from their lives and their family struggles coming to Canada. Other resonant themes include: good and evil, sacrifice, treason, regret, remorse, shame, vengeance, vindictiveness,

honour, love, and family. This exercise provides enormous overt and covert learning opportunities where theme words such as 'The Past', 'The Present' can even engage a grammar lesson. The basic first step is the learning of the word, identifying its literal dictionary meaning, its usage. Students then begin to explore how the word applies to their personal life, finding other synonymous words, followed by a sensorial investigation of the word. The exercise moves toward an embodied definition in the form of still movements, an abstract sensation, a series of tableaux (frozen pictures), a pantomimed exposition, or a silent gestured scene complete with beginning, middle and end. Gradually the word(s) move into sounds, gibberish, to the start and stumble of language, nearing communication where vocabulary and grammar inevitably present themselves, often inviting more themes to explore.

Drama Students' Work

The following examples illustrate pieces written during my OAC workshops in 2005. Although a writing process was not necessarily part of Lecoq's training, I include it in my teaching of silent play to high school students as a way to unite them, give them something tangible to follow, and also to address the writing component often required in drama course curriculum. This written work section --much like Jacques Lecoq's *auto-cours*-- comes after several sessions of instructing movement in space, neutral mask, pantomime, gibberish and so forth. That is to say, the students have all more or less acquired the rudiments of a physical vocabulary. The class is divided into smaller, manageable groups of five or six where students are asked to sit in a circle and tell one another a story on the theme of arrival. The goal is to get them to dialogue, exchange information and gather details on or about the theme word. The underlying

focus is to understand and discover the cultural differences and commonalities they share here in Canada, reflecting on where they have come from, what they have experienced, and where they have arrived. Once each has offered their stories to the group, they chose one to collectively develop given no other guidance apart from creatively embodying the written information in any of the styles they had learned (neutral mask, pantomime, gibberish) in the form of a series of tableaux or silent play. Sufficiently provided with the necessary physical knowledge expected of their scene work, this pedagogical component to the workshop is always a very telling moment. That is, once in their groups and students begin to work, Vygotsky's ZPD theory becomes very apparent. This demonstrates itself in very subtle ways. For instance, the student who was lackadaisical during the instruction period almost always asks "so what are we doing?". The group seems to naturally distribute itself too, the one who has the first idea, the one who takes charge, the one who assigns and directs, the one who wants to write it down, the one who can't sit still, etc. For those unsure, shy, apprehensive, or lost, these *auto-cours* groups offer them -- as it did for me when I was a student at the Lecoq School -- a time to understand instruction through a further processing with and by their peers (usually interpreted through teen-age idioms). The student in the ZPD needing more instruction, more understanding, will most likely not be the one who volunteers to be the 'lead role'. Yet if coerced and supported by group peers, the reluctant youth most often engages interacting within his/her capabilities where the collectivity of the group naturally sustains a ZPD feature of guided reinforcement.

Some stories offered are personal, some folkloric; some became a group conglomeration (i.e. the play was constructed from one student's protagonist, another

person's country, another's trials and tribulations) all woven together. The covert lesson is to work as an ensemble toward putting the story on its feet. Activity theory explains that without motive there can be no activity, in theatre without an objective there is no play. I often parallel scene work with English class. In the context of the (regular) English classroom students have knowledge of how to write a story (i.e., beginning, middle, climax, resolution, conclusion). In a neutral mask, pantomimed or gibberish scene/story, the same rules apply.

The specific story ideas I have selected are the personal stories written by the ELL students in the group, in first person narrative (note the grammar was purposely not corrected; I merely type-copied as they were hand written for me). I would like to stress that these students were part of a drama class (i.e., *not* a language learning class). The ELL students in this particular class -- grade 11/12 -- were at the ESL levels 3 (C) or 4 (D), already immersed in regular English subjects. All students had completed prior 10/11 drama pre-requisites and were therefore familiar with the structure of drama class. My workshop objective as an OAC guest artist, was purely one of expressive performance. In keeping with the Ontario Curriculum Grade 11 Dramatic Arts Exemplar (Ministry of Education, 2005), the students created an original script from the shared group material using role play technique as a way to develop and interpret characters in order to enact these stories. Neither the classroom teacher nor I organized or directed these groups. Commentary was only given after the work was created and presented.

STUDENT A (Poverty)

> My name is ---- -----, I am eighteen years old and I came from Guyana. I was born in Guyana and live's there for sixteen years. When I were living in Guyana I had a very very good life after my father "stanley" died. I was fourteen years old when my father died. When my Father died my life change everything seem to go the

wrong way. When my dad died my uncle took me by him and I were living there for one and a half year. When I was living in Guyana I was very Poor say if I want somethings I couldn't buy it because I did not have the money to buy it. My mother were working and my brothers too but what they work for my mom had to take the money and buy food For us to eat/ When I was living with my uncle his wife was mistreating me sometime's she was very hard to Live with and after I came to Canada when I came to Canada every thing change. I can buy anything that I want to wear or eat. I came to Canada for a good life I came here for better and to have a better live and for become somebody and that somebody that I want to be is an actor I want to be an actor sense I was seven years old.

STUDENT B (Escape)

One day while I was in school we heard gun fire and we had to jump on the floor. Our Mom was in kenya with my injured father when the war started. We lived with our grandmother and aunt. They took us aboard a bus and we headed to kenya. On the way to Kenya some men with guns and a grenade launcher stopped our bus. Luckily the men and the bus driver were friends. We stayed in kenya for two years at that time our grandmother and aunt moved to Eygpt. We moved after them and lived there for three years. We moved back to kenya and we left for Buffalo in 1997. On the Plane we watched 5 movies and played games, the Plane has a small t.v. for every passenger to watch or Play whatever games or movies they wanted. While we were driving to stay with relatives my brother got sick and vomited on the rental car and some family members. We broke up into two groups and slept with each of our relatives because our family was big. We probably came to Canada because kenya was boring and Canada has better education.

The content in the above paragraphs offer adequate information (who, what, where, when, why) for all students to collectively contextualize a group interpretation. I asked that the groups distill the information into a theme by finding an active word to best sum it up. Student A's group chose 'poverty', Student B's chose 'escape'. Taking into account that Student A had only been in Canada for two years, while Student B had been here for eight years greatly reflected the information provided. This is obvious in their writing skills. Also Student B gives more of an objective account of the situation, succinct, almost categorized moments of extremely difficult life events: "aboard a bus", "stayed in Kenya", "moved to Egypt", "left for Buffalo", etc. Whereas Student A's story, despite the two years and great improvement to her life condition,

displays a lot of affect in the writing most prominent is her capitalized 'P' in "Poor".

More often than not, what I have observed in my OAC theatre workshops is a cognitive interpretation and subsequent literal enactment of theme work. For instance, students are asked to create a scene using the word 'dependent'. What typically occurs is how they, as young people, perceive and situate a linear understanding of dependency; for example, a child dependent on a parent, or an addict dependent on a drug. I have witnessed how youth view their life stories; some arduous, horrendous, and sometimes unfathomable pasts endured and how they recount them in varying degrees of engagement usually dependent on the distance of time, and present state of life circumstances (i.e., how they have experienced the transition from then to now). These observations combined with introducing them to Lecoq's embodied pedagogies have resulted in very powerful interpretations of their life material which quite frankly is what lead me back to university and consequently to this thesis research.

Lecoq and Vygtosky in the ELL classroom

According to Vygotsky's theory, we are social beings dependent on the realm of our individual external environments, content, context, meaning, and sense (as in intuitive understanding) mediated by auxiliary stimulus of signs, tools, and symbols. As I further researched Vygotsky's work I began to consider if a carefully reconstructed integration of culturally produced (social) tools could mediate new thoughts, feelings and personal performance, could pivotally reshape new meaning toward new culture modifications. A kinaesthetic application in the English language classroom would differ in the usage and purpose of the theme word exploration. For new language learners at the LEAP (Literacy Enrichment Academic Program), ELD (English learning

development) or ESL A/B levels, grammar aspects of the theme words as nouns and adjectives are discussed and developed in the context of students' own lives, albeit in an embodied fashion as outlined in the five specific areas of Lecoq's pedagogy. This considers how ELD students translate the word, how they have encountered the word or a derived association, in order to personally connect and or identify with it. This includes reflecting (past tense) on a time you were dependent on someone or something, to that of looking forward (future), to perhaps a time of becoming *in*dependent. It also offers a subjective, abstract element to the word, as in how does the refugee student visualize it, what might it sound like, how might it feel, and via these aesthetic sensorial applications, how can the word be communicated through gesture and movement. To the newcomer student, awakening a sensorial consciousness offers a meaning dimension to the making of English words. Lev Vygotsky's extensive research examined such a process, albeit in a scientific capacity, in great detail. He calculated the meaning of a word to be an intimate amalgam of thought and/for language. A sensory consciousness broadens the potential to connect and reflect new language learning associating aspects of our everyday lives as in "a word calls to mind its content as the overcoat of a friend reminds us of that friend, or a house of its inhabitants" (Vygotsky, 1986, 212). I believe that uniting these cogent areas of Vygotsky's work with that of Lecoq's practical theatre pedagogy could effectively impact language learning for refugee youth. The essential objective of applying an additional sensorial-kinesthetic awareness is to further stimulate direct and indirect consciousness in the refugee youth's maternal language, that in turn supports and builds resources for the learning of English. Including a spatial to self awareness transforms how students interpret their identity in the new culture and the making of new meaning

where the learning process equally supports the cultural adjustment.

A 'Learning to Mean' Pedagogy

Vygotsky's field study on illiterate peasant-farmers conducted over eighty years ago deeply resonates with the interests of my research. For example, imagine those participants unschooled yet empirically rich functioning within their own capacity in the ZPD. Vygotsky explains that from infancy our psychology is mediated through cultural means when we intuitively learn to make meaning through our interaction with others (Nicholl, 1998). This study asks: can a non-cognitive process of mediation contribute to the development of lower mental function? Can a sensorial-movement based stimulation of intuitive, elementary, function meet larger gaps of accrued knowledge under the guidance of a more capable adult or teacher in the ZPD? A kinesthetic dimension might begin more of a "learning to mean" step prior to complexities of learning a systemized language (John-Steiner, Panofsky, Smith, 1994, 6).

To mean is to intend. It is also a form of expression, or a way to convey emotion (Cayne and Lechner, 1988, 619). Educational writer Elizabeth Ellsworth speaks of things in the making and not things made, of our selves in the making, the *thinking-feeling* embodied sensation of *making sense,* in the making (Ellsworth, 2006, 1 original italics). She asks whether a sensing of our selves in the making is at the root of what is knowledge in the making "and is that not the root of what we call learning?" (1).

To a non-native speaker, an unfamiliar word or words of a language are limited in dimension to their external side (Vygotsky, 1987, 5). That is to say, according to Vygotsky, it is the internalization of the word where thought and speech unite (into verbal thought) (6) and words find their meanings. The "word without meaning is not a

word but an empty sound, no longer a part of human speech" (Vygotsky, 1987, 6).

Meaning is a necessary, constituting feature of the word itself; it is the word viewed from

the inside (Rieber and Carton, 1987, 244). Internalizing the external visual environment

activates processes that engage meaning which introduces the subjectivity of

understanding:

> Anyone listening to a speech and understanding it appreciates the words and their
> meaning in his own way, and the meaning of the speech will be a subjective one
> every time, no more and no less than the meaning of a work of art. (Vygotsky,
> 1971, 42)

It is worth noting the 'double duty' for refugees who typically translate

meaning in their native language (L1) for self [42] before new language is processed in

another language– in this case English. This offers an interesting dynamic between

"learning to mean" and "learning a language" (John-Steiner, Panofsky, Smith, 1994, 6).

As all higher functions originate through relations between individuals,

certainly an 'inter-physical' mediation could provide a step, small as it may be, in

contributing to the learning of one's elemental scope. For those with limited prior

education we cannot and need not reinvent the tools, signs, symbols and artefacts

inherently situated in the new country. Rather, this thesis research seeks to aesthetically

appropriate them into the refugee youth's system of learning by including a kinesthetic

dimension to Vygotsky's legacy of indirect internalization (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1994,

3). Socio-cultural theory unpacks the making of meaning by analyzing the cerebral

mechanics behind 'how' meaning is made in and for the making of word sense. That in

turn reflects how individuals assess meaning for self through inner speech or

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[42] "Second language (L2) speakers can use their new language for social communication, they cannot use it as a psychological artifact to mediate thinking...after reading a problem in the L2, virtually all of the intermediate speakers switched to their L1 to work their way through the solution". James Lantolf. *Socio-Cultural Theory and L2*. Cambridge University Press, 2006, 71-73.

monologues (John-Steiner, Panofsky, Smith, 1994, 38). Lecoq's theatre techniques in the English language classroom suggest a different form in which to create meaning (Gadsden, 2008, 42). A 'learning to mean' pedagogy offers refugee youth an exploration of their unique, physical, cultural, self – in the space of the new "verbal environment" (Vygotsky, 1987, 101). This in parallel with traditional approaches to the learning of language engage a "reciprocal dependence" between embodied and cognitive learning of the native to foreign language (Vygotsky, 1987, 160).

The purpose of the neutral mask is to accentuate the body's personal idiosyncrasies accumulated through experience, that in turn begins to tune one into corporeal language awareness of self and others. It seeks to free habits of accumulated bodily restrictions, of closed, repressive and protective mind-sets that legitimate fixed repressions to instead challenge and return the student/actor's body to that of a blank sheet of paper from which to embrace the world afresh from a state of unknowing[43] (Frost and Yarrow, 2007, 194; Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, 76). Here new experience is the start of a process that culminates in the realization and articulation of new social consciousness, and the figuring out of where one fits in (Thompson, 1990, 170-71). The lived body is at once physical and psychical (Gallagher, 1986, 166). A physical and mental flexibility openness could essentially help produce an artistic reconstruction of the newcomer 'identity' that operates across a dis- and re-articulation of body and language (and of body as language) (Frost and Yarrow, 2007, 194). As the body and self are intertwined, body as an ongoing resource and foundation of self, provides for the self in ways in which self experiences self (Olesen, 1990, 214). In the theatre, the actor's

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[43] In this context, unknowing is not to imply a forgetting of one's history or past or a rewriting of one's experience; rather, unknowing in the sense that he or she is physically open and available to gathering new knowledge about the world through the body.

'experience' is in confrontation with other in order to understand self (Grotowski, 1969). Similarly Vygotsky wrote "the mastering of nature (as in external environment) and the mastering of behaviour (internal) are mutually linked" (Vygotsky, 1978, 55). Embodying meaning making implicates much more than just the tossing in of movement and gesture; it asks for a deeper look into what is happening in ELL outside the premise of the learning of language and more to the implications of cultural integration that follow.

Vygotsky tells us that present growth hinges on past growth, and learning leads to development, and that development is key to understanding (as in growth of the mature form) (Gesell, 1929; Vygotsky, 1986, 125). Drawing from one's foundation, one's physical instrument provides the refugee student concrete frames of reference in which to explore the new language (Yaman-Ntelioglou, 2006). Lecoq's theatre pedagogy examined within the parameters of Vygotsky's ZPD embraces the unique capacities of each youth. Integrating the 'whole package' of their experiences, of who they are beyond scholastic capacity and or efficiency, to in turn forge a relationship of respect and affirmation that welcomes and expands their sense of engagement and classroom contribution (Schecter and Cummins, 2003, 11).

Chapter Five: Interviews, Conclusions of the study with Suggestions for Further Research

As part of my research examining embodied English language learning, I interviewed two professionals whose work reflect opposite ends of the same spectrum concerning newcomers to Canada and the learning of English. Each has addressed the complexities and politics of Ministry run education, the inconsistent focus set by the administration within individual schools, and the inevitable trickle-down effect to the overwhelmed ELL classroom. Including interview research to balance the theoretical comparative/contrastive conceptual frame of this thesis, my participants' accounts confirm my observations and experiences as an artist educator, on the complex and very realistic challenges and obstacles facing this ever-changing field in education.

The Interviews

Natalie Genevra (a pseudonym)[44] is a high school educator, who juggles practical, everyday dilemmas encountered by newcomer students due to the constraints in the present public education system. Jim Cummins, my second participant is a leading scholar in second language and literacy development who devotedly advocates for the empowerment of minority students in support of the "hungry classroom teacher" through his extensive research for tolerant and equitable education (Baker and Hornberger, 2001, 14).

An exploration of the relation between art and language is central to my research which is concerned in the long-term with understanding how a theatre

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[44] The name of the school, board and participant are pseudonyms respecting the participant's preference for anonymity. This participant volunteered general, personal background information to help construct a profile, that would better present her in the context of the work and offer insight. I have integrated most of the participants own words vis à vis social descriptors and personal viewpoints. In the following writing, where interview commentary is applicable, I will refer to the participants' quotes by their initials: NG and JC, followed by the year date the interview was conducted.

application used as a social tool can push beyond the mere 'exploration' of integration issues, and contributively change the way students learn new language (Pollock and Zemans, 2007, 25-6). Drawing from the day to day of real human life, theatre fuels the stuff of visceral rather than cerebral learning, where for the marginalized refugee student, sensorial intuitiveness is an inroad to the larger obstacles of language, learning, and cultural integration (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, 45). What has been highlighted through my interviews is the role of theatre in the ELL classroom. More often than not, theatre is administered and relegated to celebratory occasion (e.g., flag day), festive holidays (providing a theme), or as independent areas of study on the assumption that intuition and intellect, feeling and reasoning, art and science can coexist but not equally cooperate (Arnheim, 1969, 295). This presented itself in the way of a conscious, resigned understanding on the part of high school teacher Natalie Genevra, and as an obvious division in Jim Cummins' analyses/reflection. Herein lie their narratives:

Participant 1:

Natalie Genevra (NG) is a fifty something, English language educator who has worked in the same large school board of a major metropolis in the southern Ontario region, since 1989. In that twenty year span, she has taught at four different high schools, mostly academic 'regular' English, ESL/ELD, including the LEAP (Literacy Enrichment Academic Program) and ELD (English Learning Development) classes. Natalie's father was a second-generation Italian, born in Ontario; her mother is Canadian-born. Despite the dominancy of her maternal grandparents' English/Irish, Scandinavian stock, she shared:

> People always assume that my family's just pure Italian because we seem to have adopted so many Italian-like customs. They even assume that my mom --a petite,

blond, freckled woman who makes her own pasta and sauce – is a Northern Italian. None of us speak a word of Italian; my dad was embarrassed of his broken hodge-podge of two dialects to teach us any. Both of his parents were uneducated -- his mom from Calabria, and his dad from Abruzzi.

Natalie grew up in a small township north of Toronto "which was almost completely 'English' in those days, there was one black man in town". Equally, the Genevras, one of only a few Italian families at the time, were often referred to as the "Ities". As a young girl, Natalie was exposed to the prejudice of difference as she and her siblings were occasionally discriminated against by neighbourhood taunts such as "Italians are dirty, and they keep chickens in their backyards." She explains that those trying childhood times of identity struggle and assertion to fit in didn't affect her, but did propel her as a young adult, to go teach in Africa (1981-1983) as part of the Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO) organization in support of alliances for global social justice. After her return (1985-1988), she was hired by the Baffin Region Board (now Nunavut) where she taught practically all subjects in the elementary panel. Many years later when Natalie moved to Toronto, she remarked how she felt like an Italian impostor. Pale in skin, she didn't speak the language and as a lapsed-Catholic, she did not follow any of the religious practices. Her eventual marriage to an Englishman further distanced her identity with any particular culture. Retaining her maiden surname marks the extent of her ethnic tie. "I don't believe in changing your name when you marry; it's so sexist, so regressive, and yet so many young women seem to be returning to that custom...but I digress". Natalie was the first person suggested by her Board Head of ELL programming due to her extensive background and specific focus on working with refugee youth. Soon after communicating with her via email, she agreed to participate in my research (October 2008). We did not actually sit down for an interview in the after-

school hours of her classroom until almost four and a half months later. Now three months on, eight months from our initial contact, through the process of analyzing her interview material, it has become very apparent how her past experiences passionately drive her both as a teacher and voice for her newcomer students in compromised life situations.

Participant 2:

Professor Jim Cummins is a leading scholar in second language education programming. He is a Professor in the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning department at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. A prolific writer, Professor Cummins has authored and edited thirteen academic books, over a hundred chapters in books, not to mention articles in refereed journals, conference papers, book forewords and afterwords, reviews and technical writings. A few of his key research areas in language learning include: minority student empowerment, cultural diversity, and the negotiation of identities. He has received numerous academic honours and is engaged in scholarly and professional activities the world over. Professor Cummins began his academic studies in 1967 as an undergraduate at the University College Dublin (UCD). He graduated in 1970 with a first class honours BA degree. After a one-year Postgraduate Applied Psychology Diploma also in Dublin in 1971, he applied and was accepted to a PhD program in Edmonton, Alberta. Arriving on 'landed immigrant' status, he completed his degree by 1974 "working on the relationship between bilingualism and cognition, and on bilingual education" (Baker and Hornberger, 2001). During that first decade of his career, ensconced in academia, he explored even broader topics such as cognition, bilingual education, psychological theory, reading

instruction, immersion education, reading difficulties, mother tongue maintenance, metalinguistic awareness, immigrant children, language proficiency, special needs children, the Irish and Canada contexts respectively, and the relationship between Anglophone and francophone communities (5-7). In practically four decades of international academic contribution, Professor Cummins fervently continues "moving the frontiers of knowledge and understanding" to the top of his career priority list (11). With no formal or informal 'gatekeeper' to side-step, it was with great astonishment to personally receive an email from Professor Cummins, consenting to partake in my field research study. Due to his very busy schedule, it took some time to juggle a date for the interview session. Seven months after that initial cyber contact (March 2009), we met in his humble, book and paper stacked office at the University of Toronto.

Creatively assembling the Genevra/Cummins data exposed the divide between perceptive learning (predominantly allocated to the arts) and that of words and numbers thinking that continues to dominate our educational system (Arnheim, 1969/1997, 2). This observation was further emphasized through a passage in *An Introductory Reader to the Writings of Jim Cummins* (2001) that I had come across in preparation for my interview with him. In this particular section, two questions are presented: the first asks if there is too much concentration on correct grammar and the correcting of mistakes in the teaching of new (in this context French) language. The second, whether dogmas are so strongly embedded in immersion education limiting the success of the system with little room for instructional imagination or progressive pedagogy (9). Given the dominant cognitive school system in place, parallel questions resonate in relation to this thesis work on a kinaesthetic pedagogical application to an English language learning frame. In

presenting this perspective to Professor Cummins, I was intrigued by his frank

acknowledgement that the system is "still set up to serve that generic, white, middle

class, mono-lingual, mono-cultural student who's not the majority out there anymore".

This confirmed speculations I had sensed as an artist-educator parachuting into the school

system and it endorsed my location as a researcher situated outside the duties, strategies,

and realities teachers negotiate and balance on a daily basis.

5.1.1 Considerations

My interviews with Natalie Genevra and Professor Cummins uncovered other

considerations in regard to my research study of an alternative addition to the ELL

classroom. Pertinent issues such:

- Social implications: communal, political, and financial in nature.
- The applications and usage of theatre in the ELL classroom, and a deeper inquiry into the differences between educational drama and theatre.
- The difficulty of inviting emotion/feeling/affect that often accompanies a subjective sensorial based learning experience into the ELL classroom.

In an attempt to address these issues with the data from my interviews, I take from

Judith Mastai[45] who spoke of her theatre locating itself at the juncture of the perceived

insider/outsider frame (Graham and Yasin, 2007, 158). Fittingly my outsider perspective

is in keeping with the exteriority of the young refugee: an external/foreign voice; a

different way of learning and living.

Just as immigrant nomenclature in the Canadian context has changed over the

years to include refugees, asylum seekers, newcomers, displaced peoples (DP's), people-

in-transit, or more recently forced migrants, so too (in the high school context) has the

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[45] Judith Mastai was a renowned Canadian museum educator, who originally trained as an actor and explored new interdisciplinary art forms in experimental activist theatre of avant-garde London during the 1970s. Extending ideas of performance and participation she undertook doctoral research into adult education and asked how people engage in knowledge outside formal educational timetables and institutions. She researched relations of non-academic constituencies to discontinuously acquired social knowledge, empowerment, and change. In Griselda Pollock's Museums After Modernism, *Un-Framing the Modern: Critical Space/Public Possibility* 2007.

English as a second language (ESL) acronym shifted to include English language

learning (ELL) and levels (1-5) within it. This includes pre-ELL, Literacy Enrichment

Academic Programming (LEAP) and/or English Learning Development (ELD).

Considering the greater limited prior learning needs of refugee youth, my study targets

this demographic of learners (at the LEAP/ELD levels) since they would most benefit

from the specificity of embodied learning.

NG: LEAP kids, they're really all ELD kids, some of them speak no English…on top of that, they've never been to school…you have a group of 14 or 15 year olds reading and writing at a grade 3 level, you have to ask why?

In her almost twenty year teaching career, Natalie has surmised some typical

reasons for this huge discrepancy in their learning, such as: personal issues, domestic

issues, crime, internal displacement, the constancy of being "on the move" and realities

of living in refugee camps. These experiences inevitably find their way into the

classroom and ultimately challenge the learning situation.

NG: A lot of stuff comes up in class… Some of the stricter Muslim cultures, when the girls hit 18, they have so little power…many issues around a women's place, a girl's place in a family, a women's value in society. I had an Afghan girl here last year who when she turned 18 was not allowed to return…and the school intervened in every way possible…I enlisted everyone's help, from the settlement worker, translators, several of us went to visit the family, to beg the family…she's a prisoner in her apartment…allowed out only in accompaniment of her brother or her father; she's basically stuck at home until her father gets her married off.

Natalie, a passionate advocate for newcomer students, not only taught English in

Nigeria for two years before going to U of T to do her Bachelor of Education, but has

done extensive additional qualification courses: 3 ESL courses, Junior Basics, as well as

picking up two child psychology courses through the University of Waterloo. Both she

and Jim Cummins acknowledge prominent bifurcations in the classroom. Quite simply,

there are those with prior English language, schooling and learning experience, and those

without. And then there are those students who are "conversationally comfortable in

English (but) not necessarily...caught up academically" (Cummins, 2009). At Natalie's

school, the latter are often assessed and placed in a grade 9, regardless of age, where the

material they are learning is primarily at the elementary school level.

NG: School culture alone is a really big curve...A number of my ELD students, they're
        just not familiar with the (sigh)whole school setting and what's expected of
        them...I can keep them active during class and they're wonderful kids, they, you
        know, participate well, they cooperate well, but very little gets done when they
        leave here. They prefer to learn in a class than on their own. They go home and
        come back and didn't do the homework. You know there's not that carry over into
        the homes of "sit down, do your homework", and there could be a lot of reasons for
        that...I try to keep in touch with the parents as much as possible... the parents
        themselves are very often illiterate; they themselves, do not have the habit of
        [promoting] reading and review. You know it's a hard habit to take on, for me that
        is a huge hurdle. As well as [having to deal with the] cultural issues.

This example quite effectively reflects the realities of the arrival experience and

the subsequent impact on the school system, the classroom, and the learning process.

For the vulnerable, socio-economic, ethno-racially-identified refugee status people,

integration basics (shelter, food, work) and adaptation issues (facing new identity,

bureaucratic claimant process) take precedence and become the survival focus (Lacroix,

2004). There is no disputing the power of coping mechanisms, of human resiliency to

push aside, numb, or even try to forget experiences of great loss, distress, and trauma.

Genevra's acknowledgement of the difficulties her language learners face in the day-to-

day of their settlement, of what they carry to school in the storehouse of their bodies

further accentuates Lecoq's improvisatory theme word on 'The Arrival' (modified for my

OAC workshops from 'The Departure' and 'The Return') exercise of my study. As an

outlet to the overall problems of acculturation, a meaning making movement application

addresses not so much the large themes or large life dilemma's but more so the details

and how they manifest themselves in (what appear) minor aspects of daily living (Rose, 1986, 61).

JC: Newcomer families who are trying to settle and figure out how the society works, have major challenges, particularly if they're coming from a cultural background that is very different from here...that would apply to refugee students, many of who have not been highly educated and so, you know, have not had to deal with these (schooling) issues in their own countries because they've been living in rural areas...you're looking at very different realities, priorities,...those students and families need a lot more support.

An interesting aspect that Genevra illuminated was her LEAP/ELD students' "reluctance to buy into the whole package"; to accept a hyphenated Canadian add-on to their cultural identity:

NG: They very often identify themselves as being non-Canadians, but say I'm Grenadian, or I'm Trinidadian, or I'm from Myanmar. They are very resistant to identify as Canadian, even the one's that have citizenship!

The majority of them "do this" new country thing but constantly talk during conversation time or write when they have their free journal time, "I'm going back to so and so". At some level there's this thinking that "I'm gonna go home. I'm not gonna stay here forever." Out of a sort of loyalty and patriotism to their country of origin, not all of them succumb to peer pressure, eager to assimilate the look and style of their Canadian classmates. Often times this leads to heated classroom discussions, bully-like interactions and harassment, invisible aspects of the dominant society, where sometimes it's just easier to conform. In *The Theatre of Urban: Youth and Schooling in Dangerous Times* (2007) Kathleen Gallagher identifies this as "strategic or coping mechanisms...invented and refined by youth in order to survive the essentializing and destabilizing forces at play" with regard to the complexities of urban classrooms (Gallagher,107). Genevra concurs that the inability to articulate their feelings combined with the volatility of their

developing emotional and introspection skills, leads to overt anger as the easiest, most obvious route in expressing their inner turmoil and confusion. She has noticed that it is more apparent in her LEAP class, most probably because these kids feel the most segregated, the most "outside". In her particular work situation, NG believes the immense size of the eighty-plus year old stone school has a lot to do with it. Nestled in the heart of an affluent Toronto neighbourhood, High Crescent Collegiate (HCC) caters to the extremes. Apart from the LEAP/ESL department, the school also offers gifted and enriched programming. None of Natalie's students come from the "half a million dollar homes in the neighbourhood." For the most part they are bussed in, or take transit, from high 'in need' priority, under-served, low-income neighbourhoods of the city that typically house the demographic of newcomer settlement. With no support or connection to the community surrounding the school, most of them have no where to go and nothing to do after school, which inevitably contributes to their sense of alienation and the belief that they don't belong, reinforcing their initial assessment that Toronto's not a friendly place, "we don't like it here".

NG: Deep down, they miss their friends. That's a big one for teenagers. Being uprooted from their friends is a *huge* trauma. Being uprooted from brothers and sisters or family members is just heart breaking. You know I've got kids here without their moms. They've left their moms back in such and such a country.
So that separation from family and friends is huge. Or they've left the person who raised them, their grandmother often; she feels like their mom. And now they're here living with a person who *is* their actual mom, but they haven't known her...they just don't feel welcome.

Professor Cummins offers that "their identity is being expanded, their identity options of who they are and what they could do is being expanded by the kind of interactions they're experiencing...where effective pedagogy in the language teaching classroom becomes inspirational pedagogy by incorporating that which relates to

students' lives and builds on what students already know". Ideologically, this is a very

progressive, encouraging statement exemplifying his empowering theories of negotiating

identities for minority students. Yet Professor Cummins is quick to reiterate that the

school system is structured to serve the generic student and the "contradictions" that

poses in education, exacerbated by the fact that, that which the student is experiencing is

emotional in nature.

Communal, Political, Financial Logistics

High Crescent Collegiate raises a very interesting dilemma which positions

bureaucratic politics and finance against that of social and community restructuring. Due

to the needs of young newcomer/refugees, a school such as HCC became a designated

facility due to space and geographic location within the school district's west-end

quadrant. Overall, HCC identifies as academically high achieving, a Board recognized

leader in cyber-technological arts, with a successful sports team. Given the extreme

life experiences, levels of opportunities, and cultural dominancy of the almost 1200

youth that make up the student body at HCC, how can a "blending and bringing in of the

many cultural values" realistically occur as Professor Cummins points out? How will

those few hundred newcomer and refugee students literally bused in, who in no way

reflect or identify with the school community or larger social community of the

neighbourhood, navigate a "Canadianizing" assimilation?

> So basically within school systems, we have diversity, we have multiple religions,
> we have multiple cultures, languages, and these can be something that enriches the
> school system incredibly. They can also be sources of conflicts. We need people
> who know how to deal with those issues, we need people that have knowledge base
> required to provide inspirational leadership in these situations. There's got to be a
> vision that goes beyond just what's in the curriculum!

Paolo Friere wrote extensively on the cultivation of the maternal language (L1) as

a necessary component for reflection, critical thinking and discovery of one's own voice.

I interpret this as a solid frame of reference from which to scaffold the learning of new

language (L2).

> It is through the native language that students "name their world" and begin to establish a dialectical relationship...without the cultivation of (their) native language...subordinate students find themselves unable to re-create their culture and history. Without the reappropriation of their cultural capital, the reconstruction of the new society...can hardly be a reality" (Friere, 1970, 159).

The reality is that these groups of newcomers most often reflect the vulnerable

end of our social stratification system, such as "in Canada"[46] refugee claimant's

financially supported by government assisted programming (James, 1995, 2;Yu, Ouellet,

and Warmington, 2007, 18). Immigration status aside, there is no ignoring that these

uprooted people represent a substantial percentage of Canada's 'new society'.

In general, schools have tremendous difficulty understanding and accommodating

the "alternative literacies" of its learners (Gallagher, 2007, 155). Layer this with cultural

and linguistic diversities, and the "serious reality of the urban areas where ELL students

are the norm" --as Cummins cautions in his interview -- all administered by the

requirements of a standardized school system. Understandably, well intentioned efforts to

try and appease competing demands inevitably force alternative literacies, to some degree

or other, into homogenized or domesticated applications (Gallagher, 2007, 155).

Expanding upon Friere's language hypothesis, a sensorial-kinesthetic pedagogy in the

frame of a socio-cultural constructivist classroom encourages the learner to arrive at his

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[46] Determined to be 'in need' of Canada's protection by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). Typically "protected persons" status (referred to as "Landed-in-Canada Refugees" (LCRs) are most usually supported through the federally funded Resettlement Assistance Program(RAP), as Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs), or as Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) (Yu, Ouellet, and Warmington, 2007, 18). In Soojin Yu, Estelle Ouellet, and Angelyn Warmington, *Refugee Integration in Canada: A Survey of Empirical Evidence and Existing Services*, 2007.

or her version of the truth, influenced by his or her background (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky's theory that individual consciousness is built from the outside in relating and

through relations with others, combined with Lecoq's physical understanding of self in

space is precisely all about addressing today's alternative scholarship.

Assessments

According to the revised Ontario Ministry of Education ESL/ELD curriculum for

English grades 9 -12, content is organized into four interrelated strands, or broad areas of

learning: listening and speaking, reading, writing, and socio-cultural competence and

media literacy (Ministry of Education, 2007, 16). Depending on the students' previous

educational experience, first-language literacy skills, and knowledge of English, students

may be placed in ELL level one through five. For example, a newly arrived student with

no prior formal schooling and no first-language literacy skills would be placed in ELD

level one. A student with some prior schooling and some knowledge of English might be

placed in ELD level two or three (Ministry of Education, 2007, 13). Realistically, due to

space, class numbers and teaching staff availability, students assessed as non-native

English language speakers often get "grouped" together:

JC: Typically those who have the most need will get support, whereas those who've
        been here for a year or two may be in a "pull-out" or "push-in" situation, where the
        ESL teachers work with the regular teachers. The difficulty arises when/if the
        classroom teacher knows little about ELL kids and you've got a situation where
        they may be getting appropriate forms of learning for part of the day, but the rest of
        the day maybe not.

"People tend to suppress that which they cannot express" (Tuan, 1977, 6). At the

English literacy development (ELD) level, supplementing an expressive artistic practice

could prove pivotal in assisting the development of new identity, coexistence, and

ensuing issues that face newcomer refugee youth when transitioning into the Canadian

mainstream. For these particular students, statistics have shown that schooling in their countries of origin has been inconsistent, disrupted, or even completely unavailable throughout the years that they would have otherwise been in school (Ministry of Education, 2007,6). As a result, they arrive in Ontario secondary schools with significant gaps in their education (6). Often students assessed at this level of ELL programming have had limited access to education in their country of origin, equalling very limited opportunities to develop language and literacy skills in *any* language. As Natalie Genevra points out, one of her refugee students finished grade 12 at age 18, reading at a grade 5/6 level. Natalie's hope is that her students progress at a rate (roughly) of two grade levels per year, but realistically she acknowledges this as steep slope for many of her LEAP kids.

"The sooner a student begins to feel at ease, the sooner she will adjust and begin to progress academically" (Edwards, 1998). Schools cannot escape the diversity of its students. Nor can it turn a 'blind eye' to settlement realities of the newly arrived, status-claim-pending issues that come along with those same students. Although "education is not therapy", Natalie Genvra recounts that therapy inevitably finds its way into education (Schrag,1972). School culture is a heavily laden complex social relation between the development of youths' own biographies[47] and social structure, where silent, suppressed aspects outside the school grounds can manifest themselves in a myriad of covert ways in the ELL classroom. There, on the inside, newcomer refugee teens juggle the experience of the school microcosm simultaneously with that mirrored in the new city/ country

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[47] D.Britzman. *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach, Revised Ed.* State University of New York Press, 2003, 232.

macrocosm.

Outside In, Inside Out

In the English language learning classroom, specifically at the English learning

development level (ELD), supporting, validating, and scaffolding the native language

have all been productive methods in helping create an inclusive climate for newly arrived

students (Schecter and Cummins, 2003, 17). Thornwood Public School in the

greater Toronto area of Mississauga is a model example of a school that has implemented

a welcoming reception protocol. Thornwood demonstrates their commitment to the

diversity of their new student's by extending the 'welcome' to include their families in

acquainting them with the school, the classroom, and the language learning program

provided for their children.

> The mission of the school is to empower students and staff in lifelong learning and
> to foster self-esteem and respect for others in a safe, caring, and cooperative
> environment. Thornwood teaching and resource personnel are constantly designing
> new ways of working with students and their parents to ensure that they feel
> welcome and secure in the school...The ongoing refinement of protocols and
> practices is crucial for the creation of a reception process that is responsive to the
> needs of new families (20).

By engaging the families of the larger cultural socio-demographic settling in the

neighbourhood, the school actively reviews and refines protocols and practices that are

responsive to the need of these new families. In essence the needs and realities of the

'outside' community inform the 'inside' school identity:

JC: What's smart is to make what's happening in the schools visible to the community
at large...so you walk into the school and there are welcome signs in multiple
languages; there are from time to time display cases with student's dual language
books. For newcomer parents walking into that school, they get a very different
message from many schools in the GTA. And so you've got a smart Principal that
will showcase what's going on, showcase the fact that this is a school where
multiple languages are welcome. Make sure that the secretarial staff in the office
are tuned into that reality, if teachers are not part of that mindset, maybe work with

them to try and make them part of that mindset. When (the school) interviewing teachers, look for teachers who are open to interacting with families and interacting with kids in ways that are not condescending, that are actively welcoming all families, cultures, and kids languages into the school. That's the potential here. The sad thing is that it is only in a small minority of school's where that's really happening.

An interesting parallel from my interview with Natalie at High Crescent Collegiate was an observation she shared of two refugee students in her ELD class succumbing to typical teen-age pressures and the osmosis of learning to fitting in. Here the dominant "outside" influences of school life highly affected these young girls offering my research an interesting perspective on how the need to externally emulate feeds and interprets "inside" formations of identity (Olesen, 1990, 205).

NG: I used to have for example, these sweet little Ukrainian girls that came in these beautiful little handmade dresses, gingham and stuff. It just looked so *pretty*! And within a few months (laughter) it was you know, the skin tight jeans and the little tops that didn't meet the bottom, and I thought, ah, it's so sad they just didn't want to keep up that look...My LEAP students are much more image conscious, they are much more aware of everybody being aware of them in the halls...how they look going down the hall...

She attributes this to the fact that her less culturally integrated morning class feel more of the "foreignness factor" than those in her ESL level classes where the English language skills are not as weak. Equally, her LEAP kids become acutely aware of their accents, tuning into "all the cool language" such as slang terms, and curse words. These subtle yet effective examples support external motivating factors that inform the beginnings of a search for new identity.

5.2 Implications of the study

JC: I agree totally with what you're saying about the kinesthetic. Often that gets kind of silo-ed. Like, okay, if you don't agree with phys-ed, here's what you do (laughter). It's just not mainstreamed. Just the same way as language would be, you know cross-curriculum. Kinesthetic education, drama education, should all be across the curriculum. It's part of literacy! When you look at what *should* be happening in schools or school boards, there should be an explicit set of criteria initiated within Boards.

In regard to my study, I believe theatre has the capacity, depth, diversity and history to initiate a set of criteria in ELL education, as Professor Cummins suggests. Theatre "permits the introduction of narratives of lived experiences into the classroom" (Fuss,1989,118). Supplementing a physical, sensorial dimension to language learning focuses on the development of "spatial relationships and sensory-kinetic perceptions of people in their bodies, of people to space and of our spatial relationships to each other" (Banes and Lepecki, 160). An embodied pedagogy component works in tandem with language learning, emphasizing strategies that address the *lived experience* by engaging the embodied knowledge[48] of the whole person (Richardson, 1992, 130; Boler, 1999, xxi). The larger discussion as addressed in section 4.2 of this study, becomes those aspects School boards have appropriated from theatre to use in education, and subsequently how to negotiate the affect an embodied dimension can potentially bring to the ELL classroom.

Education differentiates theatre and drama by its purpose and outcome. The former refers primarily to formal productions or scenework intentionally prepared for an external audience, a product; whereas drama education work is more of a collective activity within a group, in which education and process are the ultimate goals. The

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[48] Boler's embodied knowledge draws from Donna Haraway's broad adoption of her concept "situated knowledges". *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

participants' process may be developed and shared with the other members, who constitute the only audience (McCammon, 2007, 946). Compelling from this outsider artist frame looking inside arts education, is how much theatre and drama applications have been influenced by the critical structures of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal. Theatre and drama in these contexts become large platforms for social change, social intervention, the oppressed voice, collective empowerment, big themes in which to have students explore oppression, alienation, inequality, and other social issues. It is understandable how the inclusiveness aspect of this as a forum would appeal and be of great benefit in an educational construct.

There has been quite a bit of exploratory work integrating the refugee with respect to drama and theatre education. For example Rea Dennis' (2008) exploration on the performing of refugee stories in *Refugee performance: aesthetic representation and accountability in playback theatre,* Rand Hazou's (2008) look at the invisibleness of the asylum seeker in *Re fugitive and the theatre of dys-appearance*, or Alison Jeffers (2008) storytelling approach that attempts to de-victimize the plight of the refugee by successfully recounting their stories in *Dirty truth: personal narrative, victimhood and participatory theatre work with people seeking asylum*. As thorough observations that consider very real aspects on 'becoming' a refugee, a making meaning through movement pedagogy approaches a completely different embodied perspective that draws from theatre techniques but not for performative purpose. This is where my study's adjunct of a modified Lecoquian practice to the ELL classroom differs. The selected aspects of Lecoq's teachings focus not on the broad all encompassing themes of/for social action, but rather in direct contrast, on the small details that engage the refugee

student to mine his/her spirit of individualism. This is not to suggest that social action precludes individualism, but in this context the focus on the development of individualism is a focus toward an empowerment for social inclusion. For example in newcomer integration, shifting focus from the cognitive inclusiveness that language learning provides to the subtle nuances of say neutral mask work, diverts attention from the student's face and "social skin" to instead accentuate the body, which in essence, replaces the face (Ahmed & Stacey 2001). In the ELL classroom, beginning with neutral mask as an exercise levels the playing field so to speak, from which individual differences can be congruently identified to potentially demystify new culture foreignness and feelings of exclusivity. The neutral mask, in the end, unmasks. Exploring a oneness of the body enhances our commonalities in a unification of individual difference.

> Every actor is the sum of his or her experiences (real and imagined) learned from other situations in life and on the stage: the collection of behaviours to which he or she has personal and cultural access...if the actor is responding genuinely, truthfully, to the here and now of his or her situation. (Frost and Yarrow, 2007, 152).

When asked what modifications Natalie would make as an LEAP/ELD/ELL teacher to the credit and non-credit curriculum courses of her school if time or money were not an issue she answered:

> What I would need, right from the start, is maybe some really practical professional development. You know from experts in the various fields who could say, could sort of demonstrate, *this* is something you could do with art in your classroom. Because right now I would think, what could I do with art? I know we do drawing in geometry, we do 3D drawing, but I don't know really how to teach drawing! I could use a little, some P.D. around that. What about drama? There's so many other things I could do with drama. I could use some professional development. I really feel that's something (whispers) *sadly* lacking, is really good P.D...some, ah, valuable P.D. so from there I know *this* is what I want.

Natalie Genevra strives to cultivate a room where it's safe to learn, where students

feel safe "to come out of their shell a bit". In tune with their energies, she recognizes the

need to get them up and involved "in more ways than just paper and pencil." As a yoga

practitioner she felt confident in initiating meditative yoga with her morning LEAP

group. It was a way to have them wind down, look within, and quiet the saturated

changes of the new structure. Quite intuitively this engages Vygotsky's notion of

internalization. Here Genevra has created a little pocket of opportunity for a reflective

process to occur in-class through yogic exercise. At first she used to lead the students

through extensive mat work focussing on breathing and stretching exercises. Eventually

dragging out the mats became too cumbersome and the set-up process too time

consuming, so she was forced to modify the practice to resemble more of a sitting yoga:

NG: So often you're focussed on keeping things quiet and controlled because the other
       classes are going on; you focus too much on sitting down in your desks and just
       writing down on a piece of paper, you know? When we really need to do more
       different things. But I really feel that I don't have those ideas at my fingertips, you
       know. A couple of years ago, I started a type of sitting yoga that we can do on a
       kind of more regular basis. Sometimes, we did it as a way to generate writing
       (laughter). I guess I'm really writing focused. I'm sorry I don't know how to do
       that kinesthetic stuff (more laughter)...I'm amazed at how open they were to the
       yoga...I could use a little professional inspiration every once in awhile ...
       (laughter) so come and take my class whenever you want!

This is exactly where a movement-based addition to ELL could effectively

contribute to an educator such as NG, and expand resources for the student's in her

classroom. Developing a sensorial-kinesthetic application as an extension of the socio-

cultural competence strand in the Ministry approved curricula, is a response to the lack of

professional development that Natalie has identified. It is a program designed to move

beyond the linguistic limits and barriers to consider the human aspects of exploring

newcomer identity which too often get lost or stagnate in the process of acquiring a new

language or a new culture. Cummins supports grounding the knowledge in the intuitive,

in the visceral, because it "connects teacher with students as people, establishing human relationships". The aim of an alternative educational pathway to English learning is to empower newcomer students to learn about themselves as a powerful means of transition and integration.

JC: One of the core, fundamental principals of learning, is that learning taps into what or builds on what students already know. And so if you're operating from a kind of transmission model or a Freirian banking model, where my job as the teacher is to take the curriculum, get it into my head, get it into the kids' heads, well you're not going to worry about what they know, who they are, and it's totally screwed up in terms of learning. Just mainstream boring cognitive science type stuff. Or cognitive psychology....Their (teachers') job is not just transmitting a bunch of knowledge and skills, it's also a process of negotiating identities and that they (teachers) through their interactions, are either constricting identity options for students or opening them up. So that's where things like drama come in.

A conscientious, inquisitive teacher taking interest in his/her students lives is not the sole requirement for this type of supplementation to the language learning classroom. Nor does including a theatre component in this context imply the putting on of cultural 'skits', role play, the playing of native country instruments (maracas, bouzouki, sitar, tabla etc.), or (aforementioned) flag day celebrations. These types of "seeing ourselves" community, cultural acknowledgements are already in place (James, 1995).

JC: I think a lot of schools have changed, some still haven't and I think you find that kind of quote you know 'our school/their culture' in, I don't know maybe one-third of schools where there is still very much neither conformity nor orientation.

In *Valuing Multilingual and Multicultural Approaches to Learning* (2003), Professor Cummins along with Patricia Chow discuss literacy as a multidimensional acquisition belonging as much to the affective realm as to that of the cognitive realm, thereby integrating all aspects of students lives (Chow and Cummins, 33). The challenges this poses for Education, is the framing of the informal. Mans (2007) defines the informal in the sense of the subjective, affective, nature of the work which renders it difficult to

measure, assess, or grade (780). "Informal learning is usually a form of situated learning",[49] where through experiences and performances within the frameworks of societal values, a focus is placed on the nurturing of aesthetic sensibilities (780).

> Humans have developed a well defined system of interaction that educates throughout life in varied forms through gestures, expressions, touch and sounds according to our societal mores and aesthetic proclivities (780)

In this sense, proposing a kinesthetic adjunct to language learning not only encourages students to work from the intuitive, but so too, the teachers. This in no way implies a therapeutic, analysis of personal 'self' in a way that Julia Kristeva[50] would suggest the role of the therapist as a necessary model for pedagogy. This is not the self exploration of drama therapy, expressive arts therapy, psychodrama, or any other form of psychological processing. Self discovery in a Lecoquian kinesthetic practice is a self which engages critical thinking for self reflection, where self awareness emboldens individualism in the new identity towards eradicating boundaries between me and you, and of the self in experience with Otherness (Coelho, 2007).

> Theatre is born when the human being discovers that it can observe itself; when it discovers that, in this act of seeing, it can see *itself* – see itself *in situ*: see itself seeing. Observing itself, the human being perceives what it is, discovers what it is not, and imagines where it could go. A triad comes into being. The observing-I, the I-in-situ, and the not-I, that is, the other. The human being alone possesses this faculty for self-observation in an imaginary mirror....The 'aesthetic space'...offers this imaginary mirror" (Keefe and Murray, 2007, 32).

Lev Vygotsky identified two general requirements for developing what he termed self-directed thinking, which correlates with the spirit of individualism that drives Jacques Lecoq's pedagogy. They are:

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[49] In situated learning conditions, learning takes place when learners and instructors collaborate to reach some level of shared understanding, often through contextualized activities. Minette Mans, Framing Informality. In *International Handbook of Research in Arts Education*, 2007.

[50] In an interview regarding "Cultural Strangeness and the Subject of Crisis," (1990-91:161). In M. Bolen's *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education*, 1999.

1) Higher cognitive functions emerge only after students develop conscious awareness and some control of their own thought processes

2) School instruction should focus on developing these broad capabilities which, in turn, develops self-regulation.

To consider the first point, Kathleen Gallagher speaks of a "sociology of aesthetics" where the aesthetic experience connects what the student "already knows (of herself and her community), feels, and desires, and what new experience might offer" (Gallagher, 2007, 161). It is drama, therefore, that makes explicit the social context in this sociology of aesthetics. Merging Lecoq with Vygotsky contributes embodied stimuli to heighten feeling, perceiving, sensory focus in the new environment from which to elevate and enrich higher cognitive learning function resources.

5.3 Major conclusions drawn from the study

NG: My LEAP kids just don't have the wherewithal to do a lot of stuff Canadian born kids do…ELL kids don't have connections…More often than going to their math teacher or science teacher, they come to their ESL teacher and say where can I find…where do I get…you're a liaison between them and *so* many different things. Like finding a dentist, you know, even the parents will come in with forms. I've had many of my parents come in with forms and say can you help me fill out this form its for welfare or whatever…you're really going way far beyond the call of duty.

Considering Genevra's above statement, this thesis attempts to address these central questions:

- How do we better equip English language teachers for the realities they will encounter in their classrooms?

- How can we prepare/equip young newcomer language learners for the learning experience (in the classroom) beyond the learning of new language?

Ultimately as a social institution, the school system is set up to provide for the necessary learning requirements of its students. Adherence to Board/School/Ministry provided standards is expected and within that expectation, a natural desire to

competently succeed, expand, and evolve.

JC: So you've got a situation where there's generally a reasonably good set of provisions in Ontario. Over the last couple of years, there is much more activity on the part of the Ministry, and taking it (ELL) seriously. They have come up with a policy which has tightened up the requirements and expectations of school's in relation to ELL students. They've produced a lot of pretty good support materials and so there's been over the last say 2 or 3 years…its been much better and there's been I think a willingness to look seriously at the reality that certainly in the urban areas ELL students are the norm.

Cummins reflects that this offers great possibilities for the rebuilding of tailored programming "virtually wiped out during the cutbacks of the Mike Harris government in the 1990s"; to reinstate ELL steps to meet the diversified needs of language learners.

Whereas Natalie Genevra, 'in the trenches' so to speak, shares:

NG: What would be a real luxury is to be able to separate the ELD learners from the ESL learners, and to be able to really focus on the most specific needs of those groups…The little girl that I mentioned earlier, is always saying , 'can I meet with you and talk about such and such'. I almost wish I had a secretary to deal with all the paperwork! Or an assistant, or someone I could say 'ok go over there and teach the next chapter of that book blah-blah-blah and I can deal one on one with Student A's personal problems or whatever.

My interviews have brought to light larger language learning changes that go beyond the authority of a classroom, and even above that of a principal's direction. I believe the magnitude of this proposed alteration requires a systemic examination at the Ministry of Education or university Faculties of Education level. The question becomes, much like the theme and perspective of this writing, do the changes come from within or without the system? Inevitably, Cummins reminds us:

JC: Teachers are never going to be fully prepared by the pre-service program. There's always going to be a learning process on the job. Additional qualification courses that are set up for ELL teachers are by and large pretty good. It's pretty hard to squeeze anything to do with ESL students into our pre-service program. It's not yet seen as something that needs to be injected or infused into the regular classroom, that is, regular pre-service for *all* teachers. So we're still operating with the assumption of the generic student out there…At the level of Faculty of Education

obviously, there are changes that should be made. First thing is for the Directors of Education around the GTA to get together and write other Faculties of Education and say here's the kind of teacher that we want. Here are the kind of questions that we are going to ask them about supporting students -- ELL students -- in the mainstream classroom. So if there is someone training to be, or taking science as their major, you may be a very good science teacher, but if they don't know how to teach the kids who are at various stages in the process of learning English, they're not good in this context. And one of the questions that they're going to be asked is how do you support students who have been here for one year and are in your science class? We're going to look for their sensitivity to diverse families and issues of diversity and equality, and so we're letting you know that this is the kind of knowledge base we're looking for in teachers. If you don't have that in your program, get it fast! And publicize these letters so that everyone going into Faculty of Education, knows that if they want a job, they need this stuff...so you're going to get change happening at the Faculties of Education level ...doesn't cost a cent to do that. But you need Directors of Education who take this stuff seriously and who have some vision as to what Education in a diverse society might look like. And so again, that doesn't cost a cent, it just requires a reorientation of terms of what we're doing. So you're looking at issues that are essentially no cost, that could dramatically change and improve the school system. So when we haven't done that, it asks well why? Well because these are not priorities. Rhetoric may say they are priorities, but in reality they're not.

Outside the system, the Settlement and Education Partnership in Toronto, (S.E.P.T.) a city/GTA branch of the larger provincial Support Workers in Schools (SWIS) programs, has had real success in schools. These are partnerships between Settlement Agencies, Boards of Education and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). Why are they located in schools? Because schools are recognized as one of the first services that newcomers connect with in the community. The CIC has also identified the first few years in Canada as particularly difficult for newcomer students and their families. In a larger social context, collaborating with the school system provides opportunities to enhance newcomers' understanding of various aspects of settling in Canada. The value of the SEPT/SWIS contribution is that they provide support for families in helping facilitate their settlement process in Canada. They are the liaison between the students, their families, school staff and resources in the school and in the community (CCS, 2005). According to Natalie she "works her SW (settlement worker) to death". The unfortunate thing is that he is only in two or three times a week. Professor Cummins also had high praise for the work of the SEPT programs. The additional

advantage is the federal funding aspect which alleviates some of the financial burden on the schools and boards. Both Cummins and Genevra recommended that these services be expanded beyond issues solely related to the administrative aspect of settlement, and get more involved in "teaching encouragement" and tutoring newcomer students. Natalie pointed out HCC's "colossal waste of facility space", where come four o'clock, the caretakers were already busy at work, the halls empty:

NG: Why aren't there after-school programs going on? Why aren't the parents encouraged to come in and say, take a parenting class, or nutrition class, or job learning? There could be daycare...they're missing a community. You have to build, you have to encourage a sense of community, a "you are welcome", "you belong here, we're going to help you fit in"...I mean I've lived in other countries, you've lived in other countries, people in other places are really good at that. I don't know that we're that great at doing that here. I feel for these kids. They leave here at 2:30 and there's nothing to do, there's no place to go. I know there are some community centre stuff, but that doesn't seem to be enough, for where they are and what they need in regards to school...they're missing a community...and even though I talked earlier about my kids who come from violent, disturbing homes, or whatever back in their own countries, at least they had a much stronger sense of community there than they have here.

5.3.1 Additional reflections

Since returning to Canada in 2000 from a decade living and working abroad, I have been conducting workshops based on Jacques Lecoq's pedagogy in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB), York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) and with the Ontario Arts Council (OAC). There has been welcomed eagerness for the alternative programming of the physical theatre style my Lecoq workshop provides. The work has been warmly received as an 'outside' resource that favourably resonates inside school curriculum. Educator, childhood advocate and parenting expert Mary Gordon provides a great example of external programming integrated into mainstream pedagogy. She saw a need to raise social-emotional competence and reduce levels of aggression among schoolchildren and

so founded Roots of Empathy (ROE)[51]. Gordon has also developed a ROE training program where interested people in the community can follow an intensive training to obtain certification and become a Roots of Empathy Instructor. Similarly, the Therapeutic Clown Program at SickKids Hospital in Toronto, the Clown Care Unit[52] in the United States, and various cultural replicates in France (Rire Medicin), Spain, Italy and so on, are unique services that train artists to collaborate with doctors and staff. In each of these organizations, recruited "clowns" come from all walks of life: actors, musicians, stand-up comedians, singers, acrobats, writers, to name the obvious. Adhering to a specifically designed program that fits the needs of each hospital, they visit children in both inpatient and outpatient units. These include intensive care, emergency room, physical therapy, bone marrow transplant, and paediatric AIDS, using the healing power of comedy and play as prescription to help cope with the devastating realities of their young lives. Like the Roots of Empathy, Hospital Clown Programs also conduct workshop sessions for the training of appropriate clowning use within a hospital environment[53]. All of these

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51 Mary Gordon. "Emotions are the first language of the child and the universal language" *Roots of Empathy*. Retrieved on October 30, 2008 from http://www.rootsofempathy.org/

52 "Ministering to sick children goes beyond medication and technology. When a child begins to laugh it means he's probably beginning to feel better. I see the clowns as healers." – Dr. John M. Driscoll Jr., former Chairman of the Pediatrics Department at Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital of Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in New York City http://www.bigapplecircus.org/community/clown-care.aspx

53 The Canadian Association of Therapeutic Clowns/ L'Association Canadienne des Clowns Therapeutiques (CATC/ACCT) **CATC** is a professional association of Canadian therapeutic clowns, founded in 2005 with 27 charter members. The association currently has a membership from coast to coast of over 45 therapeutic clown practitioners. We define a professional therapeutic clown as one who: is specifically trained to work in the health care field, abides by a code of ethics, is committed to being a regular presence in the health care setting, collaborates routinely with other members of the health care team, engages in on-going training and development, receives appropriate remuneration for the work. Our membership reflects the richness and diversity of clowns working professionally in health care in Canada. All **CATC/ACCT** members go by the title of therapeutic clowns, whether they choose to work as a medically- based character, such as a Clown Doctor, or not. Our members work in solo and duo models, and are both verbal and non-verbal. We work with all age groups from babies to seniors. Retrieved from: http://www.therapeuticclowns.ca/whatis.html

examples, in their own way, have impacted both classroom life and the healthcare system, respectively. By intersubjectively tapping into fundamental needs of everyday humanness, they assist in identifying the gaps that inevitably help support and better facilitate each institution's larger and immediate functions.

I believe a similar concept can be developed for the identity and language learning focus of my research. I believe an imaginatively reshaped practical application from a theatre practise such as that of Jacques Lecoq, can help make new meaning for newcomer integration. The school system is an obvious pathway to gain comprehension of the new culture. It is through the lens of education that this paper (seeks to) open discussion on "reviewing, reshaping and renegotiating" the role of Jacques Lecoq's theatre as interagent bridging the trans-space,[54] from country of origin departure to the new country arrival 'experience'(Hooper- Greenhill, 2007). This inevitably summons an evaluation of the efficacious ELL system in place and asks, "what if we step outside this framework and supplement an expressive embodied art-form pedagogy to assist in the teaching and *living* of diversity identity".

> Through the actor's technique, his art in which the living organism strives for higher motives - provides an opportunity for what could be called integration, the discarding of masks, the revealing of the real substance: a totality of physical and mental reactions. This opportunity must be treated in a disciplined manner, with a full awareness of the responsibilities it involves (Grotowski, 1969, 211-12).

As we find ourselves enveloped in these fast-paced technological times, education is practically compelled to place great emphasis on cognitive processes for immediate, recognizable, substantive results. Considering the realities of diversity,

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[54] Carl Weber's essay on AC/TC Currents of Theatrical Exchange (1991) speaks of "transculturation" a new term that signifies a transfer of culture, from one country to another, where the "trans-fer" implies the "trans-port". "Trans"-space is a term to define the crossing from one space to the other.

learning gaps, and Ministry standards to uphold, to what degree can schools effectively

integrate teachings of imagination, creativity, and expressiveness as new processes of

development and knowledge building (Vecchi, 2004)? How can aesthetic aspects not get

relegated to extracurricular activities, after-school programming, or deemed 'optional'

course choices (915)? In a time when there is so much cultural difference, is it not of the

utmost importance to develop a space in education that incorporates the informal learning

of the socializing surrounding of youths' world and *its* meaning as curriculum (Mans,

2007, 779)? Vygotsky's experiments[55] illuminated such factors as a necessary

congruent for the making of concrete thinking. He demonstrated how the inconspicuous

contributes so much to the construction of perception, subjectivity, and much needed

abstract thought:

> A painting is not really just a rectangular piece of canvas to which a certain quantity of paint has been applied. Once this canvas and these paints are interpreted by a viewer as the portrayal of a person, or of an object, or of an event, this complex work of transformation of painted canvas into picture occurs wholly within the mind of the viewer. Lines have to be connected, and closed up into the outlines of shapes, related to each other, and interpreted in terms of perspective in such a way as to recall the figure of a person or the appearance of a landscape. (Van der Veer and Valsiner 1994, 248)

The value of abstraction is often underestimated. The crafted art object or

performative interpretation both evolve from a private, individual "I" born out of what

and how we piece together our life experiences and in turn, share and distribute

our knowledge (Marranca, 1991, 20).

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[55] " Studies established that mentally retarded children were not very capable with abstract thinking. It turned out that a teaching system based solely on concreteness – one that eliminated from teaching everything associated with abstract thinking – not only failed to help retarded children overcome their innate handicaps but also reinforced their handicaps by accustoming children exclusively to concrete thinking and thus suppressing the rudiments of any abstract thought that such children still have." *Mind in Society: L.S. Vygotsky*, 1978, 89.

5.4 Suggestions for future studies

In the course of researching this study it became increasingly apparent that integrating movement into language learning exposes much larger issues vis à vis refugees and settlement in contemporary Canada. I am now, more than ever, deeply passionate about instrumentally supporting refugee youth with a learning process that not only enables them through language but addresses the challenges of their cultural adjustment too.

My field study interviews confirmed that with the growing diversity of school culture, and learners new to the process of learning we are facing a) an ongoing, not a temporary situation within the educational system, and b) ELL teachers are presently 'managing' (remarkably I might add) the ramifications of the situation, and the proportionate workload that ensues. Therefore the complexities of a kinaesthetic dimension to the language learning education environment beg important questions yet to be addressed, such as how to expand current ELL pedagogical concepts; and how to cooperatively change policy perspectives that would allow for a program in theatre pedagogy for English language learning in refugee youth settlement to become integrated into the school system with Ministry run, board regulated ratification.

There are two key areas that I believe could further inform this proposal. The first is a deeper investigation into emotional quotient[56] (EQ) to intelligence quotient (IQ) for English language learning (Boler, 1999, 64). Embodied learning naturally draws from sensorial feeling and awareness which implicates a deeper study into the body in embodiment, the body in experience, the body as self, the self and subjectivity. As

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[56] "Goleman concludes that the difference between those with mediocre IQ's who are successful and those with high IQ's who fail "lies in the abilities called here emotional intelligence...can be taught to children, giving them a better chance to use whatever intellectual potential the genetic lottery may have given them". In M. Boler, *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education,* 1995, 65.

education manoeuvres tricky territory with regard to provincial and board "Codes of

Conduct", the goal is to allow aesthetic learning into the classroom that develop effective

interaction strategies in accordance with Provincial Policy/Program Memorandums

(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007).

> Leaving aside our individual meetings between student and teacher, I suggest that
> the direction for a pedagogy of emotions is genealogy; not confession, not therapy
> or spectating and voyeurism, but witnessing (Boler, 1994, 18).

The second area of extended research could focus on the term 'refugee' in today's

immigration. Specifically, further study can be initiated with respect to the social

implications and much larger social restructuring in assisting the needs of marginal, low

income realities of acculturating into Canadian cultural capital life (Bourdieu, 1993).

Una Chaudhuri (1991) writes about *The Future of the Hyphen*, and considers the

demography of newcomers and their degree of acculturation learning curves. An

investigative look into the present model of identification and an understanding of the

representation of hyphenated Canadian identities will be increasingly important. How

can we better incorporate a pedagogy that directly embraces the uniqueness of youths'

embodied race and ethnicity toward new social constructions of Canadian identity

(James, 1995, 11-33). Practically, there are three avenues that I think could greatly

contribute to continuing this examination of making-meaning through movement: for

English language learning in refugee youth settlement. They include:

- A creative piece in the form of a play that could demonstrate the contents of this thesis research where the format lends itself equally to that of conferences and lecture presentations for the ELL field, as well as for in-school student assemblies or presentations that bring attention to peer diversity and 'othering'.
- Further academic study, investigating the areas of 'EQ', body, and 'refugeeness' in relation to pedagogical strategies at the doctoral level.
- An urban CIC (Citizenship Immigration Canada)/NGO (non-governmental organization) settlement supported long-term pilot program following one school

year of an ELD or LEAP class, recording sufficient data to creatively experiment with an introduction of sensorial, kinaesthetic application could offer the language learning classroom and settlement overall.

The building of making meaning through movement programming would contribute dimension via hands-on, active instruction of supplemental skills to work in tandem with existing English language learning modules. The fostering of student achievement, regardless of status, actively contributes to the development of new Canadian citizens. These research findings at a youth focused level could then, ultimately be implemented in many other newcomer services such as government funded settlement agency programs, private English instruction institutions (LINC), and cultural community centres.

This study proposes a reframed "aesthetic space" of the LEAP/ELD classroom to explore self/other de/con/structions mediated at the intersection of Vygotsky's pedagogical theories and Lecoq's theatre techniques (Barsky, 1995; Keefe and Murray, 2007, 36). The fundamental requirement in such a space is social, cultural, human confrontation. Here, along with the speaking and grammar of English language learning, curriculum undertakes a process of education and inner transformation to empathically assist in recreating Canadian identity context of/for this inevitably intercultural[57] period in history (Grotowski, 1968).

Finally, to illustrate an example on a much smaller scale, I draw from my most recent community related experience where I was engaged as theatre coordinator for a newcomer youth program with a settlement organization in Toronto's West End. Six youth between 15-17 years of age, from various countries on different continents around the world were engaged in a pilot program to assist in their process of adaptation to

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[57] The term "intercultural is used in this context to signify transactions between separate indigenous cultural systems, when either unilaterally or mutually, elements of one culture are accepted or adopted in the other culture. Carl Weber, *AC/TC: Currents of Theatrical Change*, 1991.

Canada. All were relative newcomers with pending citizenship status, i.e., three refugee claimants, two landed immigrants, and one young person who actually received her Canadian status during the course of the program. Each newcomer was recommended to the organization by their school SEPT workers (Settlement & Education Partnership in Toronto), identified as 'kids in need' of settlement support. These youth had experienced great personal loss, had been and seen abuse, oppression, civil unrest, separation, and abandonment. I must articulate that the program was only available to such a small group due to limited municipal and provincial funding. For similar reasons the program was restricted to an eight week time-frame (I would also like to add that the waiting list was extensive). Drawing from aspects of the theory and pedagogy outlined in the study, I witnessed first-hand how effective a creative addition to learning could be. Stimulating new experiences in movement, gesture, and mask work, levelled the playing field as it was completely unknown territory for all the participants. Taking the emphasis off their limited language skills and unfamiliarity with Canadian customs and living, ultimately helped in their bonding and communication skills. On our final day as we de-briefed and reflected on the two months of stunning personal developmental accomplishments in the way of confidence, maturation, willingness to speak, attuned listening, risk to initiate, volunteer and engage with others, to name but a few of their successes. One of the young girls, in her own words, wrote a farewell summary and included a poem:

> it was an magnific summer i learned a lot of things...i learned to work with other kins of people...for me it was a diferent procces than to the others because i been through many things in life but this program and you made me able to let go of the past and look forward in the future.

Through My Eyes

Through my eyes I see a new world,
a new country with many opportunities.
Unified by a hyphen,
The hyphen that makes us Canadian.
So many different people.
Yet we are all Canadians.
Through my eyes I see and learn,
the lessons that life has prepare me for.
through my eyes life is so simple,
We all have the direction.
through my eyes I see families separate,
going on their own to new adventures.
Through my eyes I feel happiness and sadness,
and the circle of life that just keeps going.
Through my eyes I see the willingness to be better,
to outgrow problems and difficulties.
through my eyes I've seen life and death,
love and hate, happy and sad, many emotions.
though my eyes I've seen different people
coming together for one purpose only.
through my eyes I've seen adaptation,
comprehension, arguments and joyful moments.
Through my eyes I see and learn,
the lessons that life has prepare me for.
I've been here for 2 years and 6 months. I miss my grandmother's cooking and
the weather of my country.
I miss my little sister and my dog; I miss my old bedroom and books.
I miss my dad and I miss my dad scolding.

But here, now, I will keep growing and maturing.

I will take risks!

I will earn a lot of money!

I will finish my studies!

I will keep learning languages!

I will have my own house one day!

Adapt. Adapting. Adaptation

How hard can it be?

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