



ISSN 2040-2228

Vol. 9 No. 1
April 2018

Drama Research: international journal of drama in education

Article 4

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How can Dorothy Heathcote's Rolling Role serve as a channel for Healing in the Drama Classroom?

Amanda Kipling

Abstract

This paper examines the practice of Dorothy Heathcote as an active paradigm in the classroom both for the teacher and the learners. This is explored and explained in depth with reference to the work of a number of key research methodologists. The paradigm is then applied actively to the work of a contemporary classroom practitioner whose own words are used – through online audio recording - to help analyse the work described.

Key words: paradigm, drama, Heathcote, practice, healing, contemporary classroom, pupils as researchers

Introduction

This article explores how a recently qualified drama teacher embraced and enhanced her grasp on the teachings of Dorothy Heathcote in her own classroom (Heathcote & Bolton 1996; Heathcote 2002). Following an incident involving Year Nine and a homeless person in the immediate area around the school, the teacher, Rachel, decides to embrace this as a learning opportunity rather than see it as a behaviour management issue. Using a blend of Rolling Role and Teacher in Role strategies she created a process whereby she also facilitates the development of the characteristics of the fully functioning person (Rogers, 1967) and witnesses independent reflective healing taking place.

Underneath this model, however, lies a complex paradigm which realises the research positions not only of the practitioner but also the learners in the class as co-researchers into the situation and themselves. It is this underlying dynamic, coupled with the models of educational drama created by Heathcote which brings about an unusual process of healing in the hands of the learners.

The author leads a PGCE Drama course and has a keen interest in developing Heathcote praxis with her learners to enable them to grow their own teaching styles in the contexts of their own classrooms. The approach to this study is therefore from an interpretive stance, using an internal-idealist lens, actively seeking to trace the healing processes which appear to have taken place and reported by Rachel through her adoption of Heathcote's practice and the development of her own. The observations are processed by herself and then the author so possess a highly hermeneutic quality. However, the piece is of interest and illuminates how Heathcote's educational drama legacy can be developed by practitioners working in challenging contemporary settings.

The Contemporary Context

In her second year of teaching in a challenging secondary school in south London, Rachel had discovered that learners across the whole of Year Nine had had an altercation with a homeless person who had been in the area around the school for some weeks. Teaching all seven classes of the year group - a very challenging year group in terms of behaviour - Rachel had experienced great difficulty in gaining any dramatic engagement in a lesson. The learners had given money to the homeless man who had appeared disabled and were angry when they discovered him to be able bodied and not vulnerable, as they had been led to believe, but stronger than they were. They had wondered what else might have been the case with this man – what other untruths were there? This had resulted in a large group attack on the

homeless man. Rachel felt that the oncoming drama scheme on *Stone Cold*, a novel addressing issues of homelessness frequently studied in schools, (Swindells 1993) could be reworked in such a way as to address this situation.

Rachel took some guidance from adopting a Rolling Role approach. In a paper presented at the NATC in 2002, Rolling Role (Heathcote's last model on which she was still working at the time of her death in 2011) was described by Heathcote thus:

The concept of Rolling Role is to involve different groups or classes in building a community that then faces some kind of change. The initiators create a common context and agree to the key features, affairs and concerns of the community. The students/children are then involved in building the community, the lives, events and artefacts of it and add to developments. Work is often left incomplete so another group can take it forward and continue the drama.

Work produced by classes is publicly open and available to stimulate other work. (Heathcote, D. 2002)

Heathcote suggested this work lends itself to sharing through something like a website.

Rachel did not embrace all aspects of the model; there was no website and she was the only practitioner involved as the rest of the school did not share her view that this event presented a learning opportunity. However, she drew selectively from the model in order to bring about a freedom, authenticity and depth which Rolling Role provides in abundance. Heathcote very much encouraged teachers to develop their own practice from her models (Davis and Simou 2014). By working in this way Rachel felt she could achieve more than meet artificial objectives made in a curriculum context; she could provide a deeply relevant learning experience in a live context. Rachel wanted to address a need within the group and the community by penetrating into learning for life while richly addressing the curriculum requirements of the scheme of work. She harnesses the three frames identified by Kerley in her Masters thesis about Rolling Role and cited by Davis and Simou:

1. A community that exists in the present;
2. An event in the past, with links to the present (through the existence of, for example, a building, a ruin, a myth or a legend);
3. A plan for the future of the community. This hinges on a 'point of change' and is the immediate focus of the drama. (Kerley 1993: 89 as cited in Davis and Simou 2014)

As a whole year group had been involved in this incident, this choice of model met a need on a practical basis, providing a class-to-class enrichment. Rolling Role can rest upon on the teacher following and supporting the learning enquiry on a largely spontaneous basis. However, the sessions need to be prepared (rather than planned) and the teacher needs to be acutely aware of the suitability of the stimulus

and able to utilise a variety of drama forms as required in ready response to what takes place. In addition, in Rolling Role work started by one group is harnessed/used/developed by another and this provided a linkage across classes which would bind them together. This would provide security, and although there was a risk of this galvanising their anger, it could also serve the purpose of galvanising their healing. It would depend on how Rachel framed and initiated the process and encouraged organic learning – including encountering their anger in order to get through it. She was prepared on a number of fronts working spontaneously depending on what the learners brought to the session.

This article starts by examining the actual teaching and learning event with reference to Carl Rogers' humanistic approach to psychology and education as Rachel reflects on the healing taking place through her own lens (Rogers 1967).

The account is then scrutinised further by attempting to unpack more precisely what makes this process healing in its nature. This involves considering the research positions of the practitioner and the learners and how these stances contribute towards a healing process. In order to do this a simple paradigmatic model is employed (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison 2011).

Background – Rachel's training

Rachel had studied the work of Dorothy Heathcote, had engaged deeply with the practice of teacher in role during her training and had an interest in how drama supports the healing process. Consequently she had engaged with child-centred learning and explored the depths of teacher in role over two years before this particular event took place. (Heathcote and Bolton 1996).

Before exploring the actual learning process, it is important to consider pre-existing knowledge regarding healing in drama education inherent within Heathcote's praxis.

Heathcote and Healing

Heathcote developed her praxis alongside other key thinkers of the time. Starting to teach in 1951, Heathcote's critical years in education coincided with the post-war era of progressive teaching in schools. A whole movement of like-minded scholars (like Piaget 1970, Boal 1979, Friere 1970 and the newly-discovery Vygotsky 1978) was contributing to the speedy and innovative discourse regarding the shape of education in schools. It is not surprising that Heathcote's praxis carries many of the features of these pioneering educationalists at the time who held the holistic education of the learner at heart.

From the early models 'Man in a Mess' and 'Teacher in Role' (Bolton and Heathcote 1996), Heathcote ensured that learners took responsibility for their own learning by introducing them to a carefully designed frame, with well-selected resources resonating clearly with their own situations and perspectives on life. Having established their grasp on the frame, she would gradually retreat from the drama and allow the learners to work through the challenges therein themselves. This bears clear links with the ideas of forum theatre and Frierian practice. It also clearly provides opportunities for learners to develop themselves in an organic and natural way through steered (rather than structured) play (Slade 1995).

However, another figure working in this period was Carl Rogers – a psychologist and educationalist who pioneered a person-centred psychotherapy, believing that given the right circumstances a person could bring about a healing in themselves by becoming 'fully functioning' (Rogers 1967). This was closely related to learning and this interconnection between the two places itself critically and most valuably in the centre of Heathcote's praxis.

It would be useful at this stage to be aware of Rogers' 'characteristics of a fully functioning person' (Rogers 1967):

- Open to experience – they lack defensiveness
- Existential living – they are able and content to live in the moment
- Trust in their own instincts – feeling and senses are valued and nurtured
- Creativity – they take risks and embrace their own changing. They are free to think and work outside the generally held parameters
- Fulfilled life – they are happy with life and see change and new experiences as valuable

This healing element of Heathcote's practice is less examined in the literature and I attempt to address this here through the praxis of Rachel.

Kirschenbaum and Henderson cite Rogers who states that, in order for a class to become fully functioning, the teacher needs to be

'perceived as an authority figure ...sufficiently secure within herself and her relationship to others that she experiences an essential trust in the capacity of others to think for themselves, to learn for themselves'. (Kirschenbaum and Henderson 1989: 327)

It is clear that Heathcote's models adhered to the thinking of Rogers and therefore there was in existence another layer of learning taking place beyond the more self-evident socio-political engagement and the development of understanding pertaining to drama as a learning medium.

Similarly, in Rachel's lesson, the learning process was shared using her own and community experiences as a resource. Learners developed their own programmes of

ongoing learning together and individually. They disciplined themselves and evaluated their own learning which permeated beyond the studio walls. Consequently learning is deeper and penetrates both the life and behaviour of the student. (Rogers 1976)

Rachel, of course, had studied Heathcote in the contemporary setting and had been influenced by Rogers while studying for her PGCE. Since then, there has been much work carried out on notions of well-being (Eger and Maridal 2015) and healing in more developed terms (Jennings 2009). Working in the contemporary classroom, Rachel easily meshes these concepts into her thinking and through to her practice as shall be exemplified.

Rachel

Rachel is an alumna of the PCE Drama course which I lead. Sharing a common interest in healing in the classroom, we have kept in touch since she graduated. In conversation, it transpired that my theoretical thinking about Heathcote's practice and her classroom experience complemented each other. Consequently this case study grew from organic professional roots rather than a formalised research enquiry.

I invited Rachel to talk about this session in more detail, and suggested that she prepared some notes beforehand so she could talk through a prepared outline. This streamlined the interview transcription. Her own words are preserved in audio recording for key points which she makes to provide a sense of the authenticity of the situation and to gain a sense of her own thinking behind her words which is captured to a certain extent on the recording.

The Interview

Rachel explained that this altercation with the homeless man had caused 'animosity'. There was this figure who was trying to appear vulnerable but actually was a ... they found was a threat to them. She explained:

I didn't want them to feel that I was pointing a finger, and labelling them as being prejudiced, and needing to change the way they thought. What I wanted to do, was help them to understand what they actually did think and what was behind the situation, that being the individual. So they very much saw homelessness they didn't see individuals within that issue ... and they felt quite threatened by this character that was near the school that they had had an altercation with.



Rachel indicates here that she wants to engage the class in confronting their own anger. The class's feeling of being threatened made them vulnerable to anger and this had to be considered when designing her approach. Rachel wants to be in a position of trust and is consciously and deliberately retreating from a position of threatening criticism. This relates clearly to the teacher thinking required in Rogers' model. Rachel is, in herself, behaving in a manner which is 'fully functioning' and this modeling by the teacher is a key feature of the pedagogy in action.

Rachel started with a highly evocative stimulus: a sleeping bag, cardboard coffee cup and a two pence piece in the space. This simple 'set' immediately provided the scene



for the issue of homelessness. This kept the class and herself safe as no one was in direct communication with anyone else – rather the focus was on a 'set'; a theatrical device which provided a stability for this delicate initial stage and, at the same time, drew on a resource easily identified as rooted in the recent event. This features elements from both Rolling Role and Rogers' model unmistakably identifying the

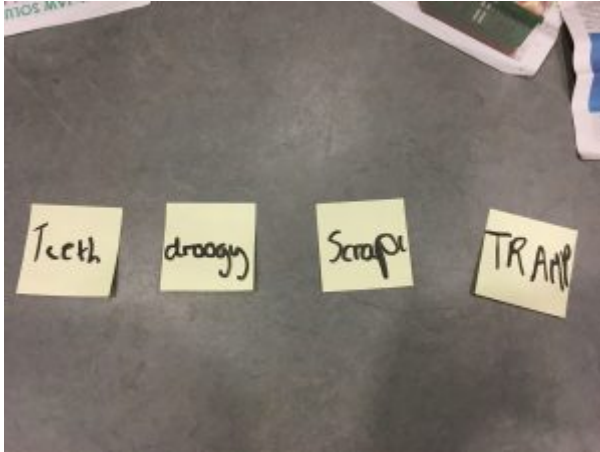
focus for the lesson. As is typical in Rolling Role, the stimulus and its accompanying frame had been most carefully prepared.

The class came in and the set drew their attention immediately. Rachel began an unusual take on the introduction to the frame.

'...write on a post-it note and put it around the edge words you would use to describe your thoughts that come into your head or feelings that come up ... because you're in close proximity to this character, how do you feel? What do you want to say? What do you start to think as you share this space with this character?'



The character is absent but they could arrive at any moment. Thus there is a tension introduced and this drives the writing of the post-its. Rachel had provided the initial stimulus and the catalyst but she invited the class to build the actual frame. This is a variation on the Heathcote model where usually the teacher builds the frame and introduces the class to it. However, engaging the class to make the frame forged ownership and trust at a very early stage.



The frame was triply rich in its dynamic. It was emotionally invested with their thoughts made manifest in writing. It was concrete in the form of the post-its on the floor around the set forming an acting area and defining a theatrical space which identified very clearly and powerfully areas of dramatic interaction which are largely innately understood. It had also been activated by the class's interaction with what had been written by other classes; the frame

had a living identity of its own for which the learners had responsibility. The openness of experience and the existential element of Rogers' model throughout this part of the session is clearly evident.

The Next Class

The post-its were left on the studio floor so that the next class could build on the work and add their own. This was the very start of an installation which was built in subsequent lessons across all seven Year Nine classes. Thus a year group could be bound together through a drama in which they all engaged and was made manifest in this installation. It is worth noting that in later stages of Rolling Role's development there features an element of publication. In this particular case the publication involving all the learners' work was in the form of this installation which grew week by week, class by class. (Davis and Simou 2014)

And they put them down and I didn't look at who was putting them down and then that stayed there and next lesson it's already there - 'There has been a character here, these are people's thoughts can you add to them?' or 'Can you tick ones you agree with?'

Rachel adopted an ethical stance protecting anonymity by not seeing who had written what on the post-its. She invited the next class to respond to the first class's notes and ideas which reassured them that they were also safe to do so. This permitted expressions of animosity and, by implication, carried a responsibility within the class to address these feelings which links to Rogers' concept of trusting a group to think and learn for themselves. They begin to evaluate their own learning by processing their own thoughts and those from across the year group as they peruse the post-its and identify patterns and points of interest. Here there is a recognition of unity and possible conformity to codes and norms, (Rogers, 1967) which is later challenged.

This provided for Rachel a Teacher in Role space and she took on the responsibility of exploring the role of the homeless person herself. This was a courageous move keeping in mind some of the writing on the post-it notes. Here, Rachel truly demonstrated that she was an authority figure secure in herself and her relationship with others.

...and when they started to see this sea of abuse build up around this figure in the middle and then me getting into the middle and letting them talk to me and comment and thought track and, you know, walk past and what do you want to say? what you want to do? We started to see that actually we are all feeling this and it's not 'you, you *can't* say that, *why* are you saying that?' it was more 'I wonder why we think this way? I wonder what it ... outside this circle, what's going on with us?...'



Skilled teacher in role meant that learners were confronted not with a homeless person – but with themselves and their own responses but in a highly safe and defused way. The post-its became live and by embodying the written word, learners were physically taking responsibility for what they had written and exposing themselves to the homeless person again through the safety of their teacher in role.

Inside the frame they had made for her, she was no threat but could reflect their thoughts and feelings back to them, and provide a vehicle for them to look at themselves while actually looking at her. Here is the moment of true organismic trust where the learners choose for themselves the appropriate behaviour for each moment – moving away from accepted codes and norms and allowing movement away from them (Rogers 1967). This is demonstrated both by Rachel, essentially, and by the class.

... I didn't want it to feel confrontational and I didn't want it to be a lesson where this is Miss D teaching you that you need to stop being prejudiced ... what do we think? Why do we think it? How can we get past ourselves?

By positioning herself thus, learners were now able to focus on themselves in a more objective way, moving from concrete post-it notes onto the 'live' teacher in role for interaction. They were safely positioned as participatory audience while their thoughts formed a spontaneous performance with the character. They were now engaging in role on different levels; firstly, as themselves both on post-it notes and in role. Secondly they are engaging as a critic of those thoughts and feelings, sliding between the two roles in a reflexive way. In addition they are interacting with Rachel as teacher in role supporting the facilitation process. Only they had been there and knew what had happened, and they now took responsibility for this experience, this knowledge and worked constructively with it, moving it on, as opposed to being angry about it. This slowing down and exploration of a disturbing event in turn led them to consider a wider range of choices, believe that they control their behaviour and so take responsibility.

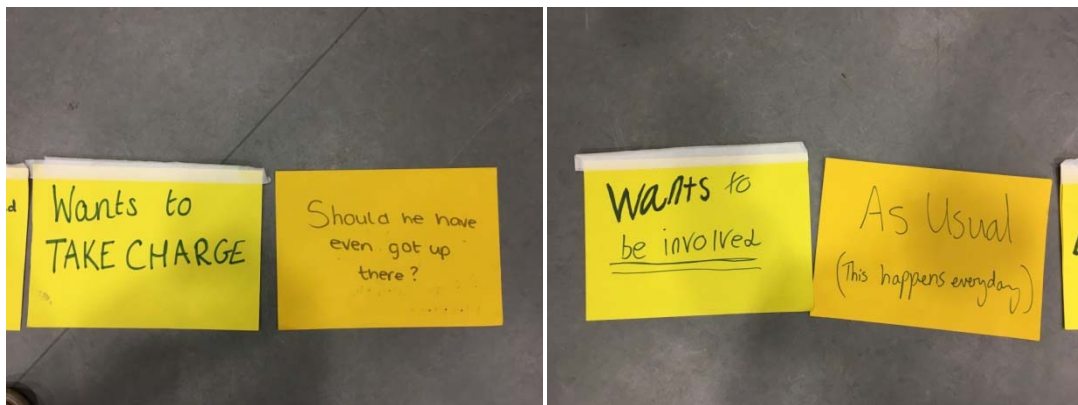
...they were able to ask questions that they might have been challenged for asking and, you know, 'that's offensive, you can't say that' and 'you can't call them that' well actually no, let's just say it, let's work with how you are thinking and feeling and by being able to start with where they were, ... the teacher-in-role allowed me to improvise them out of that thought process.

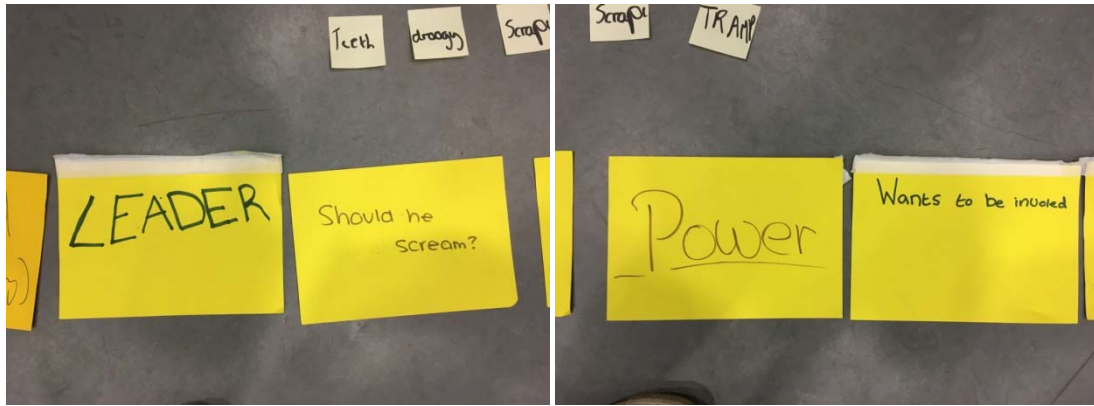


So instead of them having to play a character that they didn't understand I took it on and they were able to physically put their questions – their post-it notes - around me and I could help them through them and help them see into the individual rather than the situation.

The Rolling Role

All seven classes in Year Nine started with this lesson. Rachel worked in a highly fluid way following the lead of the learners in the seven classes. For the first time, learners worked with co-operation producing meaningful drama work manifested in various artifacts added to the installation. No two classes were the same. The focus was on themselves for a long time before Rachel re-introduced the homeless character. Some groups made roles on the wall exploring their inner thoughts and feelings in improvisations exploring given circumstance (Stanislavski 2008) revisiting these later observing to how these had changed. Taking the idea of the cardboard placard associated with homelessness, some classes made their own placards communicating their most important information on them as simply as possible and examined personal information made public (Mumford 2009).





Levels were explored: how is a placard interpreted when it is held high? And when it is flat on the floor? Some explored forum theatre and a guided improvisation about a protest which comes to a 'bubbling point' and explored this point as when they were 'out of their zone' (Vygotsky 1978). Most classes developed a mixture of these kinds of explorations as the scheme progressed.

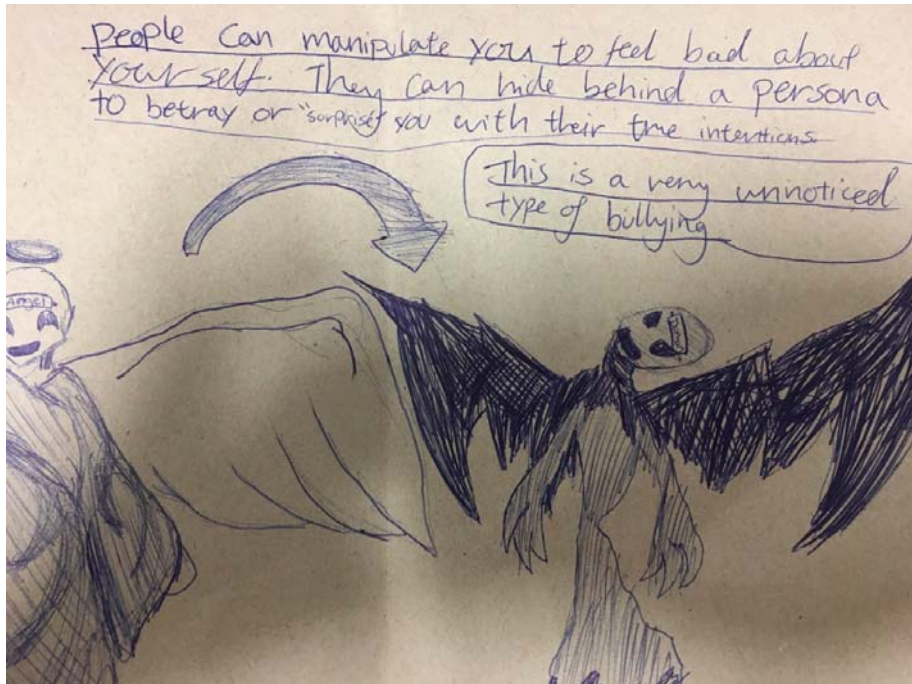
So if you take away those given circumstances you're still left with somebody. And then we used forum theatre and I was able to combine classes and use forum theatre to allow them to improvise... from the preconception into reality um and by being able to do that with two classes it was a lot bigger and they were able to sort of start to spot trends of thought and move past them.



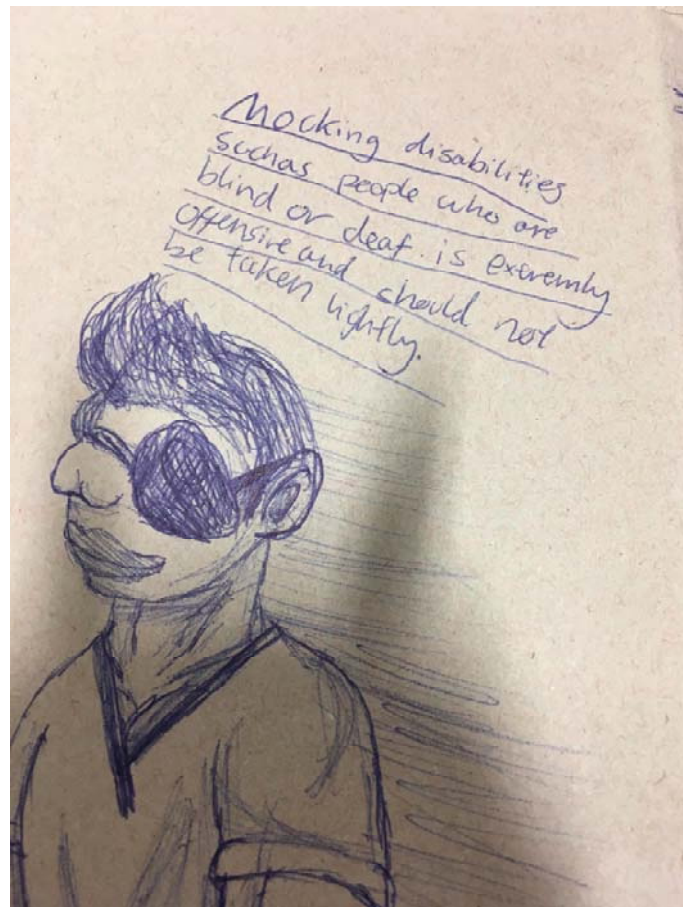
While the emphasis has been on Teacher in Role, the contextual background was Rolling Role. This binding the group together into a year group was important:

...we just had a pool of thoughts so there was a sense of being anonymous, so that worked really really well...there was less focus on the individual and their thoughts and more looking at how we think, how we all think

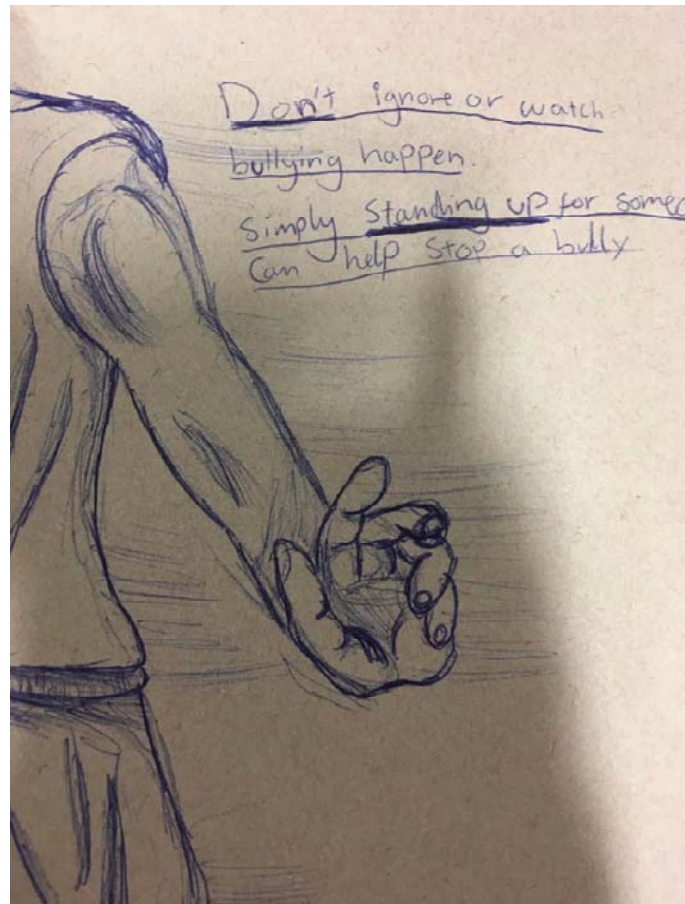
Combining classes is an unusual opportunity in schools and this, it would seem, enabled Rachel to keep her distance allowing the classes to own this process while they engaged with the principles of Boalian forum theatre and Freirean values. At the same time there was a safety in numbers – they all felt similarly and went on a similar journey of revisiting their fear and resentment and defusing it.



'Type of Bullying'



'Mocking'



'Don't Ignore'

The scheme drew to a close with an exploration of a graffiti image by Meek called [Begging for change](#) (2004) which brought the piece back directly to the original stimulus. However, this time the attitude was different, no animosity, no anger but a rationalised language expressing responsibility, and with more insight, over what had happened.

Healing

When I asked Rachel about her thoughts on the healing element of the work she identified three social wounds.

there was a level of fear and there was a level of, fear of the unknown and also ... feeling like they'd been lied to.

This penetrative thinking located the need for healing. The words 'unknown' and 'lies' indicated a desire for empowering knowledge to replace the faulty experiential knowledge they had been burdened with as a result of the incident. Rachel sees this as an opportunity for rich and badly needed learning; not something to be put down.

She perceived that they could begin to disentangle the disturbing incident from the resultant learning they had acquired from this experience. As experts in the situation, they found themselves positioned so that only their processed, reviewed, revised expertise can achieve this and move them forward.

For Rachel, the importance lay in

the students recognising that what you, what you think and what you feel isn't necessarily because of something external. So I don't think ...realising that 'I don't think and feel *this* actually *because of that*: I think and feel *this*' and I can move on.



Towards the end of the interview she remarks that in Year Nine there is a sense of community in the learning so having an awareness of what's happening in other classes and using that... to prepare your own journey, or to redirect your thinking

Here we see the realisation of a year group having experienced and learnt something as a community – rather than as fragmented classes. Rachel acknowledged this by using Rolling Role to link the lessons together and so fuse the year group identity. It would seem from this comment that she thought learners saw their ideas and thoughts nudged onto new ground by peers in other classes which provided another kind of anonymity which Rachel provided as a safety factor. Learners were safe to consider their thoughts without...

being under the spotlight and having to explain yourself, the way you feel ... it allowed them to have ... a little bit of anonymity

Many individuals in the year group had exorcised something and this impacted on their identity of the whole year group. Their attitude towards drama changed. Firstly this was shown in their behaviour and attitude to their drama lessons and the quality of the work produced. This kind of learning had enabled them to become more fully functioning, and they sensed the change in themselves. Secondly, option numbers for GCSE tripled. In September Year Nine were very hard to reach and drama lessons were very challenging. This change suggests that a deep understanding of what drama and theatre does for a community, beyond skills and knowledge of practitioners has taken root.

Having analysed the healing potential within this example of praxis the examination moves to another level in terms of scrutiny and provides another lens which complements this study so far.

Heathcote and Research

Heathcote is not generally seen as a researcher first and foremost; however her practice, it could be argued, operates as a research paradigm (Kipling 2018). Moreover it places learners in a paradigmatic position where they research themselves. I now intend to harness the previous example as a vehicle for demonstrating this second layer of empowerment; teacher and learners as co-researchers in the classroom.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) describe four underlying assumptions in modern research as defined by Burrell and Morgan providing a simple foundation for shaping the study of Heathcote's praxis as a paradigm in its own right.

Truth

Initially there is the ontological perspective to consider. Eisner suggests that the quest for ontological truth is based on a

‘correspondence of truth’ (Eisner 1992).

That is, a dialogue between the perceived and the perceiver. Eisner proposes that this is where the focus should lie when researching in the social sciences and this is precisely the realm of the Heathcote classroom and the context in which Rachel pitches her lesson.

‘I believe we are better served by recognizing that whatever it is we think we know is a function of a transaction between the qualities of the world we cannot know in their pure, non-mediated form, and the frames of reference, personal skills, and individual histories we bring to them.’ (Eisner 1992: 13)

Using Cohen, Manion and Morrison's definitions, ontologically Heathcote's interpretivist position can be described as internal-idealist and relativist as it is expected that multiple 'truths' will be made and processed through complex social interaction – in this case between teacher and learners, but also between learners (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011). At the same time, it enjoys some qualities of critical theory as it seeks to empower and emancipate learners by placing this process in the hands of learners. The harnessing of new learning is swiftly put to the test by learners as the Drama unfolds, is reviewed and re-subjected to dramatic enquiry for further development. Heathcote's learners are, in turn operating as researchers into themselves and their knowledge-making processes.

It is this second layer of research enquiry taking place which, I would argue, is a key element in Heathcote's praxis enabling learners to become empowered to fully function themselves. While in Boalian theatre the research enquiry is explicit and articulated as such, a similar enquiry is taking place in this lesson but in a more

subtle and subliminal way. The self and the emergent self being hatched during the in-role process is facilitating a research paradigm along similar lines; the multiple truths which lie within the self and wrestle with each other. This lesson offers an opportunity for these tangled truths to separate and loosen, fall under scrutiny and so release the grip they have on the learners.

Knowledge

Neelands (2006), while exploring the nature of reflective practice, explains that in the

‘Aristotelian conception of the practical arts, knowledge is uncertain and incomplete, theory is based in reflection and the concrete evidence of praxis leads to phronosis; a prudent and ethical understanding of what should be done in practical situations.’ (Neelands 2006: 25).

The direct connection with the ideas of Rogers and the praxis examined in Rachel’s lesson is clear. At the same time the subject material of the lesson is perfectly poised for this phronosic pursuit.

Rachel invites a research enquiry away from the homeless man and onto the learners themselves by simply slipping into a sleeping bag. It is through the dramatic process between themselves and their emergent selves in role, through these multi-layered correspondences of truth, where these beliefs may transform and become knowledge. The data, in the form of post-it notes, improvisational hot seating as well as forum theatre, is gathered and processed in quite a seamless way within the lesson and, unusually, between classes as they read each others’ post-its and evaluate them as well as gathering for a larger forum theatre session together. It is within this phronosic stream of data processing which the drama provides that Rogers’ model can thrive as it is rich with opportunity for developing the fully functioning person; one who can heal their own wounds.

In the Heathcote classroom the constant, active dramatic scrutiny of beliefs and values exercises reasoning and results in a stream of multiple transient truths being formulated on varying phronosic decision-making journeys (usually social in nature). These beliefs and values are put to the test and subjected to a ‘falsification’ challenge, as learners organically try to ‘test’ the learning by placing new quests on top of what is thought to be agreed premises or knowledge. I would argue that this process was very marked in the lesson described by Rachel. Year Nine could recognise the truths of their anger but also start to embrace other truths which called them into question.

Like Heathcote, Rachel accepted that the knowledge in her classroom was

subjectivist and interactive, fluid and incomplete, and concerned herself, rather, with illuminating the learning and understanding which is in progress (Heathcote & Bolton 1996).

Epistemologically speaking, Heathcote has facilitated the building of this complex phronetic structure which is constantly changing developmentally in a range of ways. However, the learners are those who are immersed in it. They are operating along the lines of co-ethnographers as a methodology both as learners and as their adopted roles at the same time.

Human Nature

The third assumption regards human nature. Heathcote's view is essentially voluntaristic: people are in control of their lives and actively involved in creating their environment. They are

'the controllers and not the controlled and there is a sense of agency, autonomy, and 'free will' ' (Sparkes 1992).

Here we see the creativity to which Rogers refers – this is a creativity of thinking rather than in art making, though in drama the two often occur together. In this particular example learners having been drawn into a dead end of learning – they feel they have no control, that they have been controlled. Their loss of agency is frustrating and this session invites them to see this dead end for what it is, and to look at the matter through different lenses, and to engage with how they want to be as individuals, as community members, as community makers.

Methodology

Sparkes says that there has been some confusion over the term methodology: the last of the four assumptions for consideration (Sparkes 1992). While I believe much has been covered already to describe Heathcote's 'general methodology' or philosophical issues, I turn now to consider her strategy.

If Heathcote – or Rachel - is working alongside learners in role, she could be described as co-ethnographer. She will be experiencing them as they are presenting themselves. This brings us towards a mixed approach which is hermeneutic, dialectic and ideographic.

Heathcote's practice involves responding organically to the situation and making judgments about how to manage or respond to emerging data. In Rachel's case she observed from outside the drama, immersed herself into the centre of it gathering data in written form outside of role, and in verbal questioning in role. Later she gathered more data and processed it swiftly working without fixed plan to ensure its processing took place through varying theatre and drama based channels (forum,

placards, role on the wall). She also had to interpret the former as it made the physical frame into which she stepped to play the role of the homeless person.

I would argue that in this model, the drama practitioner gathers data but in a very fast, fluid, instinctive way, operating from within the phronosic structure and outside of it at the same time. The drama practitioner processes and interfaces with the flow of data on a cognitive level and, if in role, engages with it dramatically as well.

The learners are immersed in the process and are processing data as themselves and in role, making new sense of multiple perceptual truths and subjecting them to falsification processes using new lenses which are offered to them and by them through the skilled positioning of the Teacher in Role as reflector.

The drama lesson did not give way to being anything else, though it operated on a number of different levels. Tselikas (2009) cites Spolin who believes that it is important to focus on the task and not become sidetracked into discussing issues while engaged in drama or theatre making. If the discussion becomes the focus, learners sink back into previously held views, rather than allowing the drama form to release them from these and see through new lenses while in role; it becomes discussion, not theatre. Interestingly Tselikas remarks that

‘when theatre becomes blurred with psychology or counseling it loses its artistic potential and its transformational power for groups and individuals.’
(Tselikas 2009: 21)

and feels that the art form should be trusted to carry out its own transforming mission. This study goes some way towards dissecting this concept and examining some of its essential elements.

Conclusion

In English contemporary educational settings with cuts to the arts in schools becoming widespread, (Norris, 2018) this study demonstrates that there is so much more than examination syllabus requirements being met in the drama classroom. Coupled with the growth of mental health concerns (Bloom, 2018) it is ironic that the very subject poised to address these issues is being cut by the system producing them. The theatre making process grew from our need to reflect on the human condition and explore ways of meeting the demands placed upon, and by, ourselves. It has always played a critical part in the quest for being fully functioning and, therefore, in healing. (Samuels and Rockwood 2010)

This double-layered approach concerning research and healing brings about a particularly rich learning experience as, not only do learners engage in a reflective healing process leading them to become more fully functioning, they also operate as

researchers into that process at the same time. This reinforces the learning and engages them with their teacher on the same professional level and journey. Drama offers these rich and critical processes to take place whereby not only a deep and penetrative understanding for theatre is developed to meet curriculum requirements but also lifelong learning and self healing processes may become embedded.

'The good life is a process, not a state of being. It is a direction not a destination' (Rogers 1967: 187).

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international journal of drama in education

ISSN 2040-2228

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