INCORPORATING PERFORMING ARTS PROJECTS INTO THE K–8 CURRICULUM

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Incorporating the performing arts into classroom projects can often build teachers' anxiety due to the feeling of pressure to produce a final performance. In fact, using drama and music can be great classroom tools for enriching activities and projects. This paper describes project-based learning in a primary- and middle-school context where the student population comprises both L1 and L2 English speakers. The article begins with a literature review of three central topics: drama-inspired activities, the use of songs, and project-based learning. It then reports on three performing arts projects, which were used in third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade classes in support of a theme-based curriculum built around essential questions. Based on the outcomes of these projects, we contend that using drama-inspired activities and songs in project-based learning can heighten students' motivation, promote their creativity, enhance their oral fluency, and increase their confidence.

Keywords: curriculum, drama activities, essential questions, Grades K–8, performing arts, project-based learning, scaffolding, songs, theater

> "I thought that acting was kind of a lie, but now I think it's the best way of understanding other people [and oneself]"—from a former student in a letter to Maria Guida (1996)

We are pleased to offer this article for NYS TESOL readers, in the hope that it will encourage teachers to use drama techniques and songs in their own lessons. We begin by sharing our perspectives on why drama and singing can be helpful. Next, we provide a brief review of some literature on the use of drama techniques and songs in teaching language and language arts courses; we also describe project-based learning. We follow with a report on three projects in a K–8 context in which the main curriculum was theme-based, and drama techniques and songs were used in projects to expand upon and reinforce the children's learning.

We hope this paper will be of use to teachers in at least four different settings. First, the ideas and resources presented here should be helpful to teachers who work primarily with English language learners (ELLs) and who are looking for additional tools and a rationale for using drama and singing to build their students' language skills, spontaneous production, fluency, motivation, and confidence. Second, we are

writing to teachers in regular content classrooms (e.g., social studies, science, history) who have non-native English speakers in their classroom populations and who wish to enhance their curriculum for all, while acknowledging the benefits of using drama and songs with ELL students. Third, curriculum coordinators will also find potentially helpful information here when working with inservice teachers on building their curricula, as well as providing them with opportunities for professional development. Finally, the rationale, ideas, and tools presented here should also be useful to teacher educators who work with preservice teachers preparing to teach in these contexts. We begin by explaining our interest in these issues.

Tim's Perspective

When I first began teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), fostering cross-cultural connections through communication was my inspiration and goal. From my own experiences learning foreign languages and the struggles of taking the new language (L2) off the page and actually using it, I knew that promoting learners' fluency and confidence in communicating would form the foundation of my teaching philosophy. My background in theater and music was a natural fit in the language-learning environment—in particular for its support of an interdisciplinary approach to curriculum development.

My teaching has been influenced by the actor's adage, "Fake it 'til you make it," which has led me through exciting, often challenging and frustrating, but rewarding experiences living and communicating abroad. I vowed to help build a similar confidence in my students, giving them sufficient practice with a set of tools for "making it" in whichever English-speaking community they chose to take part. To me, drama- and theater-inspired activities are obvious choices in helping students overcome some communication hurdles (e.g., lack of fluency, spontaneity, and confidence). Moreover, the ideas included here can be easily adapted and incorporated into language lessons to support many activities already taking place. By using drama techniques and songs as language-learning tools, teachers can make their classrooms more open and lively environments for promoting authentic language use and increased confidence.

Kathi's Perspective

I agree with all that Tim has said above. My own experiences as an ESL/EFL teacher, teacher educator, and language learner have shown me the benefits of using role play and songs in my lessons in many different subject-matter areas. I have also had experience using songs (both as a learner and a teacher) to help master target language structure and vocabulary—both individual lexical items and formulaic expressions.

This past year it has been my pleasure to learn about the K–8 context in which Tim has been teaching. He had designed, for a charter school in California, a project-based music and performing arts curriculum called "Music and Performing Arts" (MAPA) that integrates with the regular teachers' classroom thematic units and is aligned with the California state standards. Tim's teaching takes an interdisciplinary approach, one that promotes multiculturalism in both the local and global communities. My impression is that what he does would benefit many children and their teachers, whether or not those teachers have formal preparation in music or theater.

In this article, we present a review of the literature on drama- and theater-based activities, and using songs with young learners (including ELLs), and then describe project-based learning and the projects involving Grades 3–5.

Review of the Literature

Entire books have been written about using drama and songs in teaching, and about project-based learning. Here we summarize the work that has most influenced our thinking and our teaching.

Using Drama Techniques in the Classroom

Many teachers are hesitant to use drama in the classroom because they believe it involves putting on a full-scale production. In addition, they may lack confidence if they do not have a theater background (Marquette, 2016). These misconceptions raise an important question: What is the difference between the theater and drama?

Morgan and Saxton (1987) say that *theater*[1] is a product-based performance art: "Everything is contrived and the audience gets the kicks" (p. 1). In contrast, *drama* focuses on the process, as it most often takes place in the classroom, and the "participants get the kicks" (p. 1) Thus, an important difference between theater and drama is that drama can be undertaken without the necessity of a final performance (Galante & Thomson, 2017; Haught & McCafferty, 2008). This distinction makes drama more accessible both to students and teachers by alleviating the pressure to produce a final product.

Drama can be used as a learning tool in conjunction with a pre-established curriculum. According to O'Neill and Lambert (1982), incorporating drama at the curricular level can build the tools of inquiry, critical and constructive thought, problem-solving, comparison, interpretation, and judgment and discrimination. These tools lead students to a better understanding of content, as well as heightening their confidence and competence in language use in social contexts beyond classroom interactions.

In this regard, drama allows students to learn through the exploration of relationships, events, and issues by accessing the world they already know and drawing connections with their experiences in it (O'Neill & Lambert, 1982). Making connections with existing knowledge and past experience is important for schema activation and preparing to learn new material. But in using drama, participants can also exercise creativity, diving briefly into the lives of other people or experiencing situations that are different from those in their daily lives. The conventions and skills of sophisticated theater are not compulsory, but a willingness to "make believe" is key and may help boost motivation.

Increasing learners' motivation and their confidence in using the L2 are prime reasons for including drama activities. Such activities allow students to engage in a new culture with language that is specific to different settings and social situations. We should remember, however, that for students who are more introverted or reluctant to participate orally, perhaps due to personal and/or cultural differences, speaking in front of the classroom may be overwhelming at first. Scaffolding that experience by having the students write their own dialogues and scripts can engage them in language use in a less threatening way and help keep those students involved in the activity with a long-term goal of verbal participation when they are ready. In this context, scaffolding is defined as "the kinds of supports . . . that teachers provide [to] enable students to make optimal learning gains" (Walqui & van Lier, 2010, p. 12).

Self-esteem and self-confidence are also integral elements of the language-learning experience. Stern (1993) asserts that ELLs' oral proficiency improves as self-esteem increases. In fact, she notes that "loss of sensitivity to rejection and heightened self-esteem, which also appear to be significant factors in speech improvement, are fostered through dramatics" (p. 76). Drama activities may positively influence the level

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[1]We have italicized certain terms throughout as significant.

of confidence by showing students that they can indeed communicate and express themselves appropriately. In recent years, the notion of *willingness to communicate* has been expressed as "the probability of engaging in communication when free to choose to do so" (Macintyre, Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998, p. 546). Based on our experience, we believe that participating in drama can heighten ELLs' willingness to communicate. One reason for this stance is that when students take on the roles of characters, "critical judgment of what the participants say—and even how they say it—may be perceived by them as being directed toward the characters they are portraying rather than toward them personally" (Stern, 1993, p. 72).

Through drama activities, language use in the classroom may ultimately transform into language use outside the classroom. The transfer-appropriate processing (TAP) approach supports the cognitive aspect of this claim. The key principle of TAP is that the language learned in the classroom is better remembered in use outside the classroom if "the cognitive processes that are active during learning are similar to those that are active during retrieval" (Lightbown, 2008, p. 27). In a classroom that incorporates drama, students have opportunities to interact with language mentally and physically in combination with various stimulus situations (e.g., role plays, improv, various games and activities) that mimic real-world situations. Implicit linguistic memory and cognition are enhanced by both repeating and varying the stimulus interactions (Franks, Bilbrey, Lien, & McNamara, 2000). Such interactions, which can be created through drama activities and songs, allow declarative and procedural memory processing to work synergistically, strengthening the potential for better performance of procedural knowledge in the world outside the classroom (Ullman, 2016; VanPatten & Benatti, 2010).

The use of theater games and drama activities extends beyond the realm of aiding cognitive processing. In our experience, these activities promote social and cultural achievements as well. Through such experiences, students can not only build a deeper connection with each other, but also enrich their understanding of other communities and cultures. Building these rich connections fosters group cohesion as students interact with each other to create and negotiate for meaning. As an illustration, Badie (2014) related group classroom activities to *ensemble theater*. The concept of *ensemble theater* has been loosely defined by the Chicago Public Schools, Department of Arts Education as "an approach to acting that aims for a unified effect achieved by all members of a cast working together . . . rather than emphasizing individual performances" (The Chicago Guide for Teaching and Learning in the Arts Online, n.d., para. 2).

The collaboration that happens in a theater production can effectively be transferred into the classroom. According to Badie (2014) and Dörnyei (1994), group cohesion can be achieved by creating a rich working environment for students to work with each other in setting and committing to goals. Through incorporating drama activities, which are often group-focused, teachers can help students come together to participate, keep one another accountable, and promote increased engagement, all while fostering classroom unity and increasing motivation.

Drama and theater draw connections between language and emotion, relationships, and the human spirit. Burke and O'Sullivan (2002) argue that "one of the most obvious benefits of a drama/role play class is that students get to know each other . . . [and] their teacher better. Those teachers find out that they and the class interact more freely . . . than they would in most traditional classrooms" (p. xxi).

The importance of interaction in language learning is widely recognized. Years of research on second language acquisition have shown that interaction in the L2 can promote the negotiation for meaning, which provides language learners with input appropriate to their current levels of L2 development (Gass, 1997, 2002; Gass & Mackey, 2006; Long, 1981). While providing opportunities for interaction doesn't necessarily guarantee that ELLs will learn from the interchange, drama activities can foster favorable

conditions for students to lower their inhibitions and take risks in order to create and/or use language and to negotiate for meaning.

Considering output as part of the process of language learning through interaction, rather than just the product of it (Swain, 2005), we believe that drama and music activities provide ample opportunities for students to work on speaking and listening skills. Both skill sets are essential to building collaborative dialogues (Swain, 2000), which can be addressed by project-based learning (discussed below) in a scaffolded, contextualized manner. Drama-inspired projects are both process- and product-oriented and can promote confidence in the freedom of communication through speaking and listening. For example, in an experimental study of adolescent EFL learners in Brazil, Galante and Thomson (2017) discuss an experiment on the use of drama activities to increase oral fluency. They found that such use led to a significant increase in fluency: The students in the treatment groups outperformed those in the comparison group. One particularly interesting point is that neither of the teachers who were working with the students in the treatment and control groups had had previous experience using drama-based courses.

ELLs who have strong self-confidence may be more willing to engage with others in the target language than would those learners who are low in confidence. But how to encourage those students? We have found that producing language based on a script or song lyrics gives learners the support they need to feel more successful than when they have to generate original utterances—that is, the vocabulary, morphemes, and word order are already provided by the text. The learner's role is to vocalize the language of the scene or the song.

For learners who are particularly reticent or even anxious about speaking in the target language in front of others, the use of drama affords numerous opportunities for contributing in leadership and/or support functions. For instance, a student who is uncomfortable participating as an actor might be very successful (and gain confidence) by being a director or a stage manager. In this way, students don't need to feel pressured to speak in front of the class but can still use language to interact and accomplish tasks with the group.

Providing differentiated and scaffolded opportunities to build communicative competence, combined with an engaging L2 learning experience, may decrease anxiety, build self-esteem, and increase the learners' willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al., 1998). That willingness, cultivated through positive and meaningful language-learning experiences (Dörnyei, 2009), is connected to motivation and agency in language learning (Ushioda, 2007).

The concept of identity is also relevant here. Norton (2013) defined *identity* as "the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how a person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 4). We believe that students can use the interactions from drama to unpack their own personal and cultural identities in certain contexts, as well as to create new social identities as real people in those contexts (Ushioda, 2009). Allowing space for students to discover, experiment with, and create identities may increase their confidence levels.

L2 learners can enrich their social/cultural perspectives through drama. For example, by looking at scripts and watching TV shows and movies, and then re-enacting them, students can gain insights into particular colloquial lexical items, grammatical meaning and use, and a variety of contextualized interactions. Such insights can be connected to learners' social lives outside the classroom.

In addition, creating sociodramas (role plays for students to enact social issues; Scarcella, 1983) can be a valuable experience for students in drawing comparisons between English-speaking cultures and their own. Fears and concerns they may have, successes they want to celebrate, feelings of displacement, or

connections they've made can all be replayed through drama in a relatively safe classroom environment. Whether students improvise scenarios or write their own scripts, they can use their individual cultural frameworks to draw comparisons with cultures of English-speaking countries. In doing so, they connect various skill sets and subject matters to build linguistic and communicative competence within the classroom community and beyond. Drama activities in the classroom provide abundant opportunities for such engagement.

We turn now to a discussion of using songs in language classrooms as helpful features of project-based learning, a curricular approach that is discussed in detail. Songs can be used with drama-based activities or as learning opportunities in their own right. We find them to be useful teaching tools for both L2 and native-English speaking students.

Using Songs in the Classroom

There are both cognitive and affective reasons to use songs with young language learners (Tucci & Bailey, 2012). For example, as Griffee (1991) pointed out, "Songs create their own world of feeling and emotion and as we participate in the song, we participate in the world it creates" (p. 30). Lo and Li (1998, para. 1) claim that using songs in language lessons provides a non-threatening atmosphere for students, who may experience anxiety when speaking English in a formal classroom setting. According to Linse (2006), using songs at the beginning of class may help L2 children shift into English. Several authors (see, e.g., Griffee, 1991; Maley, 1987; Saricoban & Metin, 2000; Schoepp, 2001) assert that singing in the L2 can promote vocabulary learning and the acquisition of formulaic phrases (Tucci & Bailey, 2012). In addition, Smallwood and Haynes (2008) posit that singing together provides a positive context for young pupils to function in a group.

Using songs also adds variety to lessons (Ajibade & Ndububa, 2008; Richards, 1969). Maley (1987) notes that the qualities of memorability, rhythmicality, recitability, universality, and playfulness make songs interesting and fun. He states that songs "as forms of language use are universal among human beings. No known language is without them. And the themes they deal with are common to all cultures (though the way the themes are dealt with may differ)" (p. 94).

The repetition that occurs naturally in singing lyrics can support learners in automating their L2 use (Schoepp, 2001, Cognitive Reasons section, para. 1). Although the practice of repeating sentence structures through drills in the audiolingual era was largely decontextualized and could be boring, Richards (1969) notes that in singing, "repetition is meaningful, and songs provide a means of increasing the amount of repetition possible without losing the learner's interest" (p. 161). Furthermore, songs provide practice opportunities for learning about stress, rhythm, and intonation (Saricoban & Metin, 2000, Songs section, para. 2).

It is widely believed that songs also facilitate memory and retention (Abbott, 2002). The rhyming patterns of song lyrics can help people make memorable associations (see Newham, 1995–1996). The connection of words and music helps people remember concepts learned through songs: "Music can help to improve attention span and memory and can enhance vocabulary acquisition" (Hill-Clarke & Robinson, 2003, p. 5). Koning (2011) states that "music doesn't just fool students into enjoying the study of verb tenses; it also activates parts of the brain used in the study of language" (p. 32). Likewise, Schunk (1999, para. 3) says, "There are cognitive functions common in processing both language and music that are necessary for second language acquisition."

Adding actions to songs can increase pupils' engagement with the music and with the ideas in the songs. Linse (2006) claims that using actions or props while singing can help children remember not only

the meaning of new words but also the context or story told in the lyrics (Linse, 2006). Shin (2006) notes that "children have fun with movement, and the more fun for students, the better they will remember the language learned" (p. 3).

We must acknowledge that not all students are comfortable with singing. Tim recounts an episode with a fourth-grade boy who refused to sing during certain units, but who suddenly became engaged with a non-musical drama project about the lives of scientists (see below). As teachers, we need to be aware that not all students will be interested in each activity. We have to be versatile and eclectic in our lesson planning, in order to meet the needs of our diverse learners, in hopes of promoting "buy-in" for participation in varied activities.

We turn now to a discussion of project-based and inquiry-based learning, focusing on its use in incorporating songs and drama techniques. In doing so, we review only a portion of the available literature on these important topics. (For further research, please visit www.tirfonline.org/resources/references for free downloadable reference lists on using drama, songs, and project-based learning and teaching in L2 contexts.)

Project-Based and Inquiry-Based Learning

Project-based learning is described by Nunan (2017) in the following way:

A project contains most of the key characteristics of tasks: It has a beginning, a middle, and an end; the focus is on the creation and exchange of meaning rather than the manipulation of form; there is a link between the classroom work and the world beyond the classroom; there is a concrete outcome or "product"; completion of the project involves working through a series of steps or carrying out a number of subsidiary steps. In some ways, a project can be thought of as a "super-task." (p. 128)

Likewise, Stoller (2002) notes that "project-based learning should be viewed as a versatile vehicle for fully integrated language and content learning, making it a viable option for language educators working in a variety of instructional settings" (p. 109).

Seven essential characteristics of project-based learning have been described by Larmer and Mergendoller (2010): (1) a need to know, (2) a driving question, (3) student voice and choice, (4) 21st-century skills, (5) inquiry and innovation, (6) feedback and revision, and (7) a publicly presented project. These authors also note that for a project to be considered meaningful, it must fulfill two criteria: "First, students must perceive the work as personally meaningful, as a task that matters and that they want to do well. Second, a meaningful project fulfills an educational purpose. Well-designed and well-implemented project-based learning is meaningful in both ways" (p. 34).

Project-based learning in K–8 contexts has been discussed by several authors in general education. Hung, Hwang, and Huang (2012) utilized project-based learning in a science course with fifth-grade students in Taiwan. Grant and Branch (2005) conducted research on project-based learning with middle-school students in the United States. Hernández-Ramos and De La Paz (2009) reported on eighth-grade students using multimedia tools to create mini-documentaries on U.S. history.

According to Doppelt (2003), project-based learning is "a well-known method for imparting thinking competencies and creating flexible learning environments" (p. 255). In his research with low-achieving Israeli junior high school students, the goal of adopting project-based learning "was to augment self-image, increase motivation for learning, and promote all pupils towards success in matriculation examinations and towards further college-based education" (p. 258).

Liu and Hsiao (2002) also used project-based learning with middle-school pupils, in the context of learning about multimedia design. Their project gave learners "an authentic challenge and require[d] students to tap into their diverse intelligences, such as artistic, logical, linguistic and musical talents, to accomplish the task" (p. 311). The quantitative analysis showed that after completing the project-based course, the students' motivation for learning was statistically significantly higher on five components of motivation: intrinsic goals, extrinsic goals, the value of the task, their beliefs about their control over their learning, and their self-efficacy for learning.

Inquiry-based learning is linked to the use of a driving question, a view supported by Chu, Tse, and Chow (2011). Drawing on the work of Harada and Yoshina (2004a, 2004b), they state that "inquiry-based learning . . . is a pedagogical approach that uses questioning to involve students actively in their own learning" (p. 132). Their view is that project-based learning can be promoted through inquiry-based learning, which leads to "an in-depth exploration of issues, themes, or problems without predefined answers" (p. 132). Such projects can engage learners' interests through the application of what they have been learning.

We turn now to the context in which Tim used project-based learning—incorporating drama and songs to support a middle-school curriculum at a charter school in California.

The Context of the Music and Performing Arts (MAPA) Projects

Though the use of drama and songs is the main focus of this paper, we want to embed our discussion of those resources in the curricular context of Tim's teaching situation. The classes where he used such activities were part of a theme-based curriculum that utilized project-based learning—that is, the curriculum is structured around topics that delineate six units per grade level and can be thought of as broad headings for those units. This curricular approach was ideal for implementing the use of drama and songs in student-produced projects, described below.

The school has a goal of promoting multiculturalism; this focus plays out in terms of both the surrounding multicultural community and the world community. Within the school population, some of the children are second language speakers of English. A school goal is that these students will be reclassified as fluent English proficient by the time they reach the fifth grade. This is, however, the school's goal rather than a mandated policy, and there are, in fact, a handful of students who remain un-reclassified in the upper grades. The children whose L1 is not English predominantly come from Spanish-speaking homes.

The projects documented in this article took place in the third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade contexts. Instruction is built around the concept of essential questions, as described below. Tim's MAPA project-based work was either linked to the existing K–8 theme-based units and essential questions or built upon essential questions that Tim himself posed for the MAPA classes.

Third Grade: This Land Is Our Land

We begin with the description of a "mini-project" with songs that Tim used with his third-grade students. The first thematic unit in their regular classes was called "This Land Is Our Land." The essential question for this unit posed by the classroom teacher was, "How do the structure of our democratic government and the contributions of individual citizens promote American culture and ideals?" To this issue, Tim added his own essential question, which focused on music: "How do traditional American songs promote American culture and ideals?"

To explore this question, the children learned several songs, and discussed why they are important to our cultural identity as Americans. For example, after learning the U.S. national anthem, the children generated "definitions" about what a national anthem is—the musical characteristics, the themes conveyed through language, and what such songs represent to a nation's citizens. The students also listened to national anthems from other countries, including Italy, Mexico, India, the Philippines, and Canada—the countries of origin of some students' families. Using English translations of these national anthems, the students then did a compare-and-contrast activity by looking at the various anthems through two different lenses: by seeking themes that are present in the lyrics/language content, and by analyzing the music based on style, instrumentation, and the emotions it evoked.

The children then learned and sang "This Land Is Your Land" and "You're a Grand Old Flag." In teaching the pupils these songs, Tim focused the discussion around the essential question—how songs promote American culture and ideals. The children were able to discuss how and why patriotic songs are important, both to Americans and to people from other countries. The children noted that we need to respect the themes that the songs embody, because in our history people have died to protect our freedom. (Whether this view came from their regular classroom studies, input in their home environments, or from the media, we don't know. We simply observe that the students made these connections with the song lyrics.) The issues of respect, empathy, and understanding others were a part of the focus here. Thus, the unit helped the children understand the significance of such songs beyond just listening to them. To conclude the project, the students learned the song "Fifty Nifty United States," which was used as a tool for helping them learn and memorize the names of the states. This example illustrates Abbott's (2002) point that learning songs facilitates memory and retention.

How can learning and singing songs be considered to be a project? We return to Nunan's (2017) definition that a project "has a beginning, a middle, and an end; the focus is on the creation and exchange of meaning rather than the manipulation of form" (p. 128). The students' ideas and developing awareness of the significance of national anthems illustrate this emphasis on meaning. Nunan also noted that "there is a link between the classroom work and the world beyond the classroom" (p. 128). This point is clear in the way that these singing activities connected to the overarching theme of the unit. Finally, although the outcome of the project was the children's singing and discussion, rather than a performance or a product of some kind, these activities did involve "working through a series of steps or carrying out a number of subsidiary steps" (p. 128). A point to note here is that projects can be small or large, but they should be designed to be appropriate to the children's age and developmental stages, relevant to the curriculum, and engaging for the learners.

Fourth Grade: Energy and Waves

When the fourth-grade children were working on a thematic unit called "Energy and Waves," Tim created a drama project that connected with and reinforced the material covered in that unit. The essential question posed by the classroom teacher was, "What is energy and how is it used?" The curriculum for this unit involved learning about various scientists. In framing this issue, Tim focused on the "energy of theater." His essential question was, "How do actors use energy to rehearse and perform a script?" Responding to this question involved discussions and activities about vocal energy, emotional energy through language (word emphasis), and physical energy in dramatic performances.

To begin, Tim found a brief, age-appropriate script from Readers' Theater about the life of Louis Pasteur, which the children read, rehearsed, and then presented to their classmates. In the performance, the students had to demonstrate their abilities to use vocal, physical, and language energy (i.e., emotional

energy expressed through language). The second function of the Louis Pasteur script was that it served as an example of the dramatization of a scientist's life. Using that script as a model and scaffolding tool, the students wrote their own scripts and skits based on other scientists whose work was related to energy.

One of the features of scaffolding discussed by Walqui and van Lier (2010) is that the teacher reduces the frustration level involved in tasks by breaking down a complex task into steps. This project exemplifies such a step-by-step process in the following way:

1. Tim first had the children read, rehearse, and perform the short script about Louis Pasteur.
2. They then brainstormed the names of scientists they could remember from their classroom unit, to which Tim added names of other scientists (e.g., Albert Einstein, Marie Curie, Lise Meitner, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Ben Franklin, Nikola Tesla, etc.).
3. The students used the Louis Pasteur script as a model for writing scripts about those other scientists' lives.
4. To support the writing task, Tim provided brief biographies and fact sheets at the fourth-grade reading level about the scientists whose names the group had generated. These authentic materials gave the students the basic information they needed to write summary stories, like historical fiction, as a first step leading to writing their own scripts in small groups.
5. After a revision process, the students then rehearsed those scripts in groups of five or six.
6. As a culminating activity, the students' regular fourth-grade teachers came to the MAPA class to watch the students' performances. (There was not a public final performance.)

Each original scene involved one or two narrators providing biographical information about the particular scientist, followed by their groupmates dramatizing a scenario about that specific moment in the scientist's life. There followed further commentary from the narrator(s) and more dramatization, culminating in a conclusion by the narrator(s) they presented to their classmates. In doing so, the students had to demonstrate the various kinds of theatrical energy they had studied earlier in the unit.

We believe that this multipart procedure resulted in a far different outcome from what would have been the case if Tim had simply told the children to write scripts about the lives of scientists whom they had studied in the regular curriculum. The content class teachers commented positively on the students' creative extension of what they had learned in class. Tim's perspective is that the children not only learned theatrical performance techniques, but also gained experience communicating clearly to an audience (e.g., intention, projection, and enunciation—i.e., language energy). The project worked well on academic, creative, and language production levels.

Fifth Grade: Time Traveler Scripts

An example of a semester-long MAPA project is illustrated by connecting drama and music to the fifth-grade curriculum, which consisted of six units: (1) Native American Communities, (2) Exploration, (3) Matter, (4) Ecosystems, (5) The American Revolution, and (6) Westward Expansion. Tim posed two specific, essential questions to guide this project: First, what are the elements and building blocks used in creating works of theater? Second, how can we use our knowledge of the elements of theater combined with content knowledge to write our own one-act plays? He worked with two different fifth-grade classes, each of which wrote an original one-act play about characters who travel back in time. The classes also added pre-existing songs to their plays, rewriting some of the lyrics in order to fit the context.

One of the fifth-grade groups wrote about space exploration. In their story, the protagonist is a struggling student who often gets in trouble in class. The teacher sends the student to the "time-out box,"

but the time-out box is actually a time-traveler box. The student/protagonist goes back to 1969 and meets the astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin (studied in class during the Exploration unit), and accompanies them on their mission to the Moon. The script includes planting the flag on the Moon, and Neil Armstrong uttering the famous line, "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

On their way back to Earth, the astronauts get the coordinates wrong and accidentally travel through time and space to Mars in the year 2003, for the first Mars *Rover* mission (also studied during the Exploration unit). They discover hydrated minerals, which leads them to believe that there could be life on Mars. In fact, they cross paths with two Martians. They briefly interact with the Martians in a scripted version of an improv game called "Alien Talk Show," which had been played in class. The students themselves chose to incorporate the use of this improv game, which features a talk show host and his alien guests, who speak in their own alien language (gibberish created by the students assuming the roles). The talk show host then takes audience questions (from the class) and interprets the alien guests' answers into English for the audience to understand. In the students' scripted version, they used the role of the narrator to interpret what the aliens were saying to the astronauts. In the end, the astronaut explorers return to their spaceship and go back to Earth. By this point, the time frame is actually the present day and they arrive in the protagonist's classroom. There, the three share their adventures with the entire class, and then Armstrong and Aldrin use the time-out box to return to 1969.

The students in the other fifth-grade class wrote their script about Native American communities. In this context, the children reviewed what they had learned about the exploration of North America and the impact of colonization on these communities. The students chose to focus their script on the contact between the Lewis and Clark expedition and the Native people of the territory they explored.

In working on this project, several girls in the class took the "fiction" part of "historical fiction" to heart and wanted to add another character to the script. They believed that there should be a female explorer, in addition to Lewis and Clark, so they added a character they named Rose. Another example of the students' initiative and creativity involved their rewriting the lyrics to a popular rap song, which they based on the history of the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark expedition. These examples illustrate a point made by Boudreault (2010): Through the use of drama, students "are encouraged to express their own ideas and contribute to the whole. Creative drama will offer exercises in critical thinking and the chance for the students to be creative" (Benefits of Using Drama section, para. 2).

This unit involved writing scenes for the script. In carrying out this part of the assignment, one L1 Spanish-speaking student, who had recently been reclassified as English language proficient, asked Tim if he should write the Native Americans' dialogue in English "the way we speak it." Tim asked the student for an example. The boy shared with Tim some possible lines in a pidginized variation of English in the scene where a Native American chief invites Lewis and Clark to come in out of the rain (e.g., "Me want you come inside"). Tim replied, "Well, because we don't know exactly how the early Native Americans actually spoke, how about if you use contemporary English, the way you would talk? We don't want to seem to be making fun of how people speak."

This example illustrates the important language awareness-raising opportunity that emerged for this student as he led his group in writing the script. We can only wonder whether the child's understanding of how Native Americans speak was influenced by a fifth-grade reading assignment, *The Sign of the Beaver* (Speare, 1983). In an incident from that story, an injured Anglo child is helped by a Native American, whose lines include, "White boy very sick. Now well." The Native American character refers to the child's ankle by saying, "Not broke. Mend soon. Sleep now. Not need medicine more." The question raised by

Tim's student became a teachable moment to help the class understand racial stereotyping based on the linguistic features of a particular character through media portrayal.

In writing the scripts for these two projects, the fifth-graders discussed the structure of a story. While writing their drafts, the children incorporated the concepts of setting and characters in the introduction, followed by a conflict or a problem. They then worked through the process of a journey, with action rising toward a climax, followed by a resolution or conclusion. The students from both classes performed their 20-minute one-act plays for each other and their parents in a learning showcase.

Beyond using language to write their scripts, the students were required to rehearse and memorize their lines. No costumes and sets were involved; instead, the audience was asked to suspend disbelief by imagining those elements and focusing on the scripts the students wrote and their delivery of the performance. In that performance, the students were assessed on vocal projection, clarity, pace, and delivery, all skills they'd worked on throughout the rehearsal process. We want to stress that a public performance is not essential, although preparing for one can be highly motivating.

Discussion

The context in which these activities were used included both L2 and native English-speaking students. While we have not conducted empirical research, and therefore cannot make any strong claims about the benefits of the projects described here, our observation is that both types of students developed in heightening critical and constructive thought, interpretation, and judgment and discrimination (O'Neil & Lambert, 1982). The projects led to their engaging with their own interests (Chu, Tse, & Chow, 2011); building self-esteem (MacIntyre et al., 1998); creating new social identities (Ushioda, 2007); and integrating both content and language learning (Stoller, 2002). In addition, these projects were centered on an essential question, and clearly involved student voice and choice, as well as continual feedback and revision, while working toward a final performance (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010). As Nunan (2017) discusses, the focus in these projects was "on the creation and exchange of meaning rather than the manipulation of form" (p. 128) and there was "a link between the classroom work and the world beyond the classroom" (p. 128). Finally, completing the project involved "working through a series of steps or carrying out a number of subsidiary steps" (p. 128).

We believe that these projects did provide positive reinforcement for the children's learning of the subject matter in their regular classes, as well as opportunities to develop their discourse skills regarding the content of those thematic units. In fact, some of the regular classroom teachers shared with Tim that as a result of these projects, the students were more engaged with the material than had been the case in previous years.

As these descriptions illustrate, the students' experience in preparing and enacting their scripts produced rich opportunities to interact in and with language—for example, Tim's contribution of several examples of lexical learning (e.g., the scientific vocabulary the fourth-graders needed to write about scientists involved in energy research). Furthermore, the process of writing their scripts and song lyrics involved the students in expressing their ideas in writing, revising those texts, and learning the techniques of storytelling and dramatization, in addition to developing their performance skills.

Conclusion

We believe that these projects promoted the school's multicultural goals in the following ways: First, the students learned songs from different countries and read about histories of various people (e.g., Native Americans, scientists, and explorers from other counties and earlier eras). Second, some of the

fifth-grade girls took the opportunity to rewrite history and add a female explorer to the Lewis and Clark expedition. Third, as exemplified by the student who carefully considered how to render the speech of Native American characters in his script, writing scripts and song lyrics provided opportunities for the children to scrutinize language critically.

We hope that this article has provided teachers, curriculum designers, and teacher educators with creative strategies for enhancing their current curricula and lesson plans through the use of projects incorporating drama and songs. Our goal is that some of the ideas and examples of drama activities and songs in the projects discussed in this paper, and the rationales for using them, will help teachers build upon the resources they already have, thus inspiring them to be even more creative and innovative with their lesson planning and execution. Teachers should feel confident and capable in incorporating drama and activities into projects that allow students to link content in cross-curricular ways that will have the added benefit of increasing linguistic gains and outcomes. We believe that through creative output and interaction, negotiation for meaning, and risk-taking, students will build deeper connections with each other and with the L2 content, thus increasing motivation and building confidence as English language users in the world beyond the classroom.

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