
*Inner City Life Through Drama: Imagining the Language Classroom**

SHIRLEY BRICE HEATH

Stanford University

Both language learning theorists and practitioners of teaching English as a second language or dialect have argued that role playing moves language learners beyond their usual performance in ordinary classroom presentations. This paper tells the story of how inner city youth organizations use dramas that young people write, cast, and direct to enable them to retain their first language or dialect while gaining standard English and preparing for job entry. The story ends with implications for the language classroom.

Much of what I have to say here is about drama. All literature involves the willing suspension of disbelief, and drama is no exception. So I must ask that readers suspend disbelief and conjure up their powers of imagination for the next few pages.

Begin, please, by imagining a theatre of actors milling about on the stage with their manager. The group is about to launch into the production of a drama, and the players scurry about, back and forth, with their written scripts in hand. The manager admonishes them as they attend to their texts and try to get themselves into their roles; he warns against too much reliance on "the empty form of reason without the fullness of instinct, which is blind" (Pirandello, 1950, p. 213).

At this point, six characters—disreputable sorts—enter saying they are in search of an author. The six describe themselves as unused creations of an author's imagination, and they wish to play their parts. The manager is furious and challenges them, trying to dismiss them as mad. The intruders persist. Their desire is to play their parts not for eternity but "only for a moment." One of the intruders explains: "The drama is in us, and we are the drama. We are impatient to play it" (p. 219).

* This is a slightly revised version of a plenary address delivered at the 1992 TESOL Convention, Vancouver, Canada, March 1992; many of the oral features of the text have been preserved.

This situation forms the heart of a play written by the Italian playwright Luigi Pirandello in the 1920s. But it also lies at the heart of a series of stories I want to tell of young people in search of an author—or we may substitute here teachers—who will acknowledge their desire in language to do what Pirandello refers to as “to make seem true that which isn’t true.” The actors in search of an author in Pirandello’s play claim that the truth does not lie in prearranged words by an authority “out there,” but in a multitude of possibilities:

Each one of us has within him [or her] a whole world of things, each . . . of us his [or her] own special world. And how can we ever come to an understanding if I put in the words I utter the sense and value of things as I see them; while you who listen to me must inevitably translate them according to the conception of things each one of you has within himself [or herself]. We think we understand each other, but we never really do. (p. 224)

The intruding actors of Pirandello’s play tell the professional actors who experience their lives as directed by words on the page and the rules of the manager that truth is not that which is determined by standard measures or by a display of words alone.

SCENE SHIFT

Now, within your imagination, add another stage to that of Pirandello’s play, and put yourself down inside some of the most distraught and confused inner city neighborhoods of North American cities. Walk these streets and note the empty playgrounds of the housing projects; see the graffiti that marks the territories of neighborhood gangs; and hear the worried talk of older women who gather outside one of the local groceries. As you move down the street, duck into an alcove and climb the stairs to the second floor of a commercial building, where a neighborhood-based youth organization brings young men and women together to practice a play about an origin myth popular back in Puerto Rico. In another room, other youngsters work on a script that will capture the dilemma of a young man leaving behind in Puerto Rico his girlfriend when he decides to go to the United States to make enough money to return for her.

Many of these young people speak Spanish at home; all are from families in which the adults did not complete their formal secondary education. These youngsters go to a secondary school (Grades 9–12) named for a Caribbean hero, and they take ESL classes, where they say and write *words*, using textbook and teacher modeling as the primary bases of their daily classwork. Once outside the classroom, most

move into Spanish, the dominant peer language. Most feel they are “doing OK” in English in school, but that they cannot show in their classes what they “really” know or can do with the language.

At the neighborhood center—where all the adults are bilingual in English and Spanish—the young people write their plays, rehearse, and perform them in Spanish, often consulting texts written in Spanish to check on “the old stories” or to see how stage directions are written for “real plays.” Once their performance is ready, the neighborhood center holds an afternoon or evening event—sometimes at the local Latino Cultural Center—and parents and friends come to watch. But in this area of shifting gang turfs and unpredictable outbreaks of competition among gangs, some adults fear coming out on the streets at night. Thus the youths perform their plays also for a special videotaped session.

However, for this session, their youth director reminds them they must prepare subtitles in English (to make the videos available to their monolingual friends) along with some written programs that explain certain plays—especially those with a historical base or reference to myths or *cuentos* (stories) that may not be familiar to all viewers. Working in small groups of 5 to 8, the 30 or so young people take up these tasks, arguing among themselves about whether or not they should also prepare a program to explain the plays they have written that are based not on older known and historical sources, but on their own experiences in their remembered departures from Mexico and Central America or the Caribbean. They talk here about whether they can write about changing sexual norms of their grandparents and even some of their parents: no sex before marriage; or if you promise yourself to someone, that promise should be honored for life. They want to prepare a program that will explain how conscience is not a single thing, but many sided.

They script, practice, discuss, and perform plays that, for the most part, explore the same dilemma that one of Pirandello’s characters explained to the manager of the studio they invaded in search of an author:

So we have this illusion of being one person for all, of having a personality that is unique in all our acts. But it isn’t true. We perceive this when, tragically perhaps, in something we do, we are as it were, suspended, caught up in the air on a kind of hook. Then we perceive that all of us was not in that act, and that it would be an atrocious injustice to judge us by that action alone, as if all our existence were summed up in that one deed. (pp. 231–232)

What are the tensions within this central dilemma?

- Conflicts between the sexual norms of their peers and those of public entertainment heroes, on the one hand, and the rules and regulations their elders and the school lay down for them, on the other

- Conflicts between their own struggling self-image as *not* part of the city's gang life—so intensely identified by the police and public media along ethnic/linguistic lines, and some new self-image that will somehow bring power, possibility, and promise
- Finally, the central conflict resting on their fears of getting jobs, of where they will go with the education and the English language that seem to promise so much and to give so little for the friends they have seen finish high school and then search and search—often fruitlessly—for a job that offers some dignity

By now, you may feel that you are an audience in search of a point. What relevance does all of this talk of drama have for teachers of English as a second language? Is there any theory here to drive practice? Where is the research? Are these simply provocative tales that have no bearing on the many types of programs and circumstances of learning English that the professionals of TESOL represent?

The research here draws from a 5-year study of the life of young people in inner city youth organizations that the youngsters of these neighborhoods judged effective. A team of ethnographers, including 20 junior ethnographers from the neighborhoods, studied the language uses in activities of approximately 60 organizations (ranging from baseball and basketball teams to drama groups and teams of gymnasts) in three major metropolitan areas of the U.S.

Drama in a variety of forms turned out to be a frequently occurring activity of youth groups. Many organizations simply made use from time to time of role playing (e.g., to help resolve disputes, to put youngsters in the role of teachers, police officers, doctors, etc.). Others devoted themselves entirely to drama, dance, and music, incorporating a considerable amount of ethnic history, community life, and contemporary crises in communities and families. In all of these, the youngsters themselves chose the themes and wrote the scripts. Under adult guidance, mentoring, and sometimes through an apprenticeship system, they helped stage, direct, costume, and produce their plays. They also took part in the videotaping of their performances so that they might be able to take their performances into the homes of their friends in the housing projects or neighborhoods where they lived. In some sites, the youngsters took their dramas—covering topics that ranged from teen pregnancy to cult life—into public secondary schools for use as the opening of small-group discussions among students and school personnel.

A striking pattern became clear early in the analysis of the language of practice and performance. Youngsters who had either dropped out of school or did not see themselves as performing better than "OK" in school were speaking and writing at what would usually be judged as

relatively high levels of performance if transferred to the words and tasks of the school classroom. This was true not only for nonnative-English-speaking students learning English as a second language but also for students whose street dialect or vernacular differed markedly from that of standard English.

In other words, once these actors became their own authors, they seemed to tap in performance a deep range of linguistic competence that they otherwise did not display. The power of role shifting, of framing themselves in play, and of using the new voices acquired through becoming actors seemed to loosen a host of abilities undiscovered in the ordinary run of classroom requests for *displays of knowledge* rather than full *performances of knowing*.

SCENE SHIFT

Let me call on your imagination once more. Move across town now to a store-front theatre set in the midst of businesses (50% of which have been closed for a year or more) and enter a set of double doors. Here young people aged 8–18 practice dances that will be part of a show they have written about the random shooting of a young boy in the nearby housing projects. The youngsters have written the script to begin with the shooting and to end with the funeral of the boy. In between, they include such characters as the television newscaster broadcasting from the scene of the shooting and talking with local residents; they produce a portion of the evening news broadcast to portray the shooting and other news (statistics related to poverty, teenage pregnancy, and the economy) plus the weather and sports. For the scene of the funeral at a local church, they cast themselves as the mother and younger sisters of the slain, the preacher, choir, and pallbearers. They do not forget an acting corpse in the open casket. Preparation for this show—which, after many weeks of rehearsal, is videotaped for editing—includes numerous sessions for different actors who talk about when street talk goes and when standard English is the norm. The evening weather reporter, sportscaster, and news anchor, as well as the news reporter on the scene, must use standard English, whereas those interviewed in the projects must use the local vernacular. The young people write out their scripts, practice handling and reading from them as their models on the evening news show do, and work to capture the nuances of body movements and gestures that reflect the seriousness of the news and the more jocular tone of sports and the weather. Younger participants, most of whom are in the dance and choir numbers, often sit by and watch rehearsals after they have practiced their dance routines.

hearing—and seeing—their older friends model lessons about language use, power, and institutional roles.

PERFORMANCE THEORY

But where does the theory of such performances lie, and does this research suggest anything about language learning? Let me draw from the language analysis of both the youth leaders and the young people to lay out some findings first and then to suggest theories that help explain what happens here.

These findings can best be set out in a comparative frame with formal classroom learning. But first a caveat: I lay out here features of what may be called traditional classrooms that are instructor- and textbook-centered, though I know full well that many ESL classrooms do not operate exclusively with the features noted here as those of formal classrooms. However, I set the findings off comparatively for the sake of provoking some *imagination* about ways in which we as teachers might begin to build some bridges between the two seemingly opposing worlds of school and community organizations for youth.

The comparative analysis of language uses in classrooms and in neighborhood-based organizations can be summarized as follows.

Unit of Focus

In the classroom, the primary unit of focus is the individual learner, while in community youth organizations, the primary learning unit is the group engaged in the accomplishment of a group goal.

Medium for Display of Knowledge

In classrooms—even language classrooms—the primary medium for the display of knowledge tends to be written; some ESL classes feel forced to center students' attention on the need to learn to *write* English because the majority of judgments of their academic ability will depend on their performance in writing. In community youth organizations, writing comes as a natural and necessary part of a rich communication array—including spoken, gestural, spatial, and written means.

The Value of Practice

In classrooms, teachers often feel the need to overcome what they perceive as students' resistance to skills (and drills). In community

youth organizations, adults assume skills exist within the group and that when the task demands certain skills or bases of knowledge, the group will set about to acquire those—making sure they get the practice they need to meet the necessary performance norms. A special note regarding drill and practice is needed here. There are those in pedagogy who decry “skills and drills”—the repetitive practice of language in classrooms. Yet in community youth organizations, practices go on and on, and scenes are rehearsed again and again. The raw footage, for example, of the single day of taping of the funeral mentioned above illustrates the hundreds of times youngsters had to redo shots of the evening newscast—in spite of many months of practice. Here the goal of a good performance, the outcome of which the group would approve, motivated these young people to undergo willingly the drills necessary to master the skills necessary for their roles in the drama.

Access to Diverse Models

In classrooms, teachers must struggle to find models of English speakers other than themselves that they can feasibly bring into daily learning activities. In community youth organizations, the diverse ages, histories of migration, and degrees of exposure to English of the participants offer ready models of different types for the youngsters. Moreover, when they use videotapes or recordings as additional models, they do so with the idea of adapting their own language and gestural behaviors to improve their character portrayal in a planned drama. Hence, they move “in character” as they draw on the models available to them in the youth organization.

The Question of Who Teaches and Who Learns

In classrooms, teachers see themselves as instructors—transmitting knowledge about the language, words, and standards. Teachers tell, talk, direct, and test. In community youth organizations, youth leaders see themselves more as coaches—as individuals there to help keep a reality check on the tasks the youngsters take up, to direct rehearsals, and to offer support and encouragement. They also evaluate and hold up high standards of expectation and discipline for the group, but they usually do so speaking through and for the potential future audience the group will have to satisfy with their final dramatic performance. Thus all speakers practice and respond not for and to teachers but to their imagined future audience of critics.

Funds of Knowledge

In classrooms, teachers find it tough to draw on the funds of knowledge that youngsters bring to school with them that rarely find their way into the language lessons of the day. In community youth organizations, the funds of knowledge of the young people as a collective create in large part the texts, tasks, and tests of their learning projects. Teen drama organizations depend on the youngsters to know the local church that is most likely to let them videotape part of their show there, the local funeral parlor which will lend a casket, the local cultural center most likely to have the feathers necessary for enactment of an ancient origin myth centering around a giant bird. Perhaps most important, the shared judgments of the youth and their leaders continually grow and develop as they move from performance to performance and set higher standards for themselves.

SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

What can we make of these differences between classrooms and youth organizations? Are there ways to bridge between them? Let me suggest a few ways to start such a bridging and then move to those theories of learning environments that can undergird any such bridging efforts.

First, as we increasingly see schools moving into some responsibility for the physical and mental health of their students, we need to think about the possibilities of learning what is going on for youth in their neighborhood organizations. The learning environments of such organizations bear many similarities to those of employment: Tasks are complex, direct instruction is minimal, stakes are high, and quality demands relentless. Though inner city youth find many types of youth organizations ineffective from their point of view, others do meet their ideals of good places to be.

As schools create community councils to work with them in school-based reform programs, they need to determine from the youth in their schools whether or not there are local youth organizations they find effective in their neighborhoods. Schools should then invite the leaders of these organizations—adults and young people—into the council and find ways that class credit in language classes (as well as others) can come from certain types of participation beyond the classroom door—in dramas such as those described here, for example.

A second suggestion relates to my earlier call for imagination. The push for year-round schooling increases in many parts of North America; opponents to this idea argue that more of what already

appears not to be working for kids will not do any better. Perhaps what we need to think of—especially for ESL learners—are opportunities for summer drama programs that will bring these youth together to write and perform their stories for use in the multicultural curriculum. Currently, many schools and teachers are scurrying about trying to find appropriate multicultural materials, when excellent funds of knowledge about an array of languages and cultures exist among students. Moreover, because students often put into their dramas, not only distant history and myths, but also the recent history shared by young newcomers to North America, their materials provide a strong link to other students.

Such summer drama programs would bring together youth leaders, teachers, and students around oral and written language and into an array of tasks. Moreover, for students whose first language is not English, summer projects through which they must research, write, and perform in their own language bring them closer to older family members. Such individuals in the community organizations we studied often became resources for youth groups, enhancing parent-teen relationships *and* enabling youngsters to join together in oral and written activities that required their native language. Funding could be shared between school districts and neighborhood organizations. Many of these organizations already offer summer camps, though usually of shorter duration than the 4–6 weeks it would take to bring a drama to production. Currently, many districts offer funds for mentor teachers who usually work during the year with new teachers; some with appropriate interests could now work instead with youth leaders in summer programs for youngsters. Through these programs, teachers and students should receive credit for learning in new and different kinds of experiences. For example, native speakers of foreign languages offered through the secondary school curriculum could write dramatic scripts for use by their age peers studying such languages as Spanish, Russian, Japanese.

Third, schools would do well to imitate neighborhood organizations and think of the power of drama and of fuller uses of role playing for bringing out performance that reflects the fullest possible range of linguistic competence of students. For those towns with museums, art galleries, historic districts, for example, teachers could arrange to have a team of students act as docents for out-of-town visitors whose L1 is the same as that of the students. Such activities might take place only one weekend a month, or only during the summer, but preparation for these tasks would engage students in authentic learning and testing. But, you may ask, why would using their first language contribute to their English skills? Two ways: First, the materials of museums and many of the explanations of their tasks as docents or guides must come

in English through models that extend beyond their teachers. Second, from many second language acquisition researchers, we have learned that if the academic register or formal uses of language for talking about subjects such as those of the school are acquired in the L1, they come more readily in the second language—in this case, English. Students who may not otherwise use their L1 for formal explanatory—even instructive—purposes, will be called upon to do so in their roles as docents or guides.

One other example: On KQED television (the public television station of San Francisco), announcement times between programs frequently include the voice of a bilingual child announcing the station and the supporters of the next program. The young person is not pictured but speaks over the station logo. He or she first makes the announcement in the L1 and then adds, in English,

Hello, my name is _____, and what I just said was in Hmong [Amoy Chinese, Spanish, etc.], my mother tongue. I am bilingual, and I use _____, my mother tongue, at home, with some of my friends, and I use English at school and also with some of my friends. What I said was. . . . You are tuned to KQED, Channel 9, a public television broadcasting station.

With a good deal of imagination and cooperation, and riding the wave of current interest in spreading information and understanding of multiculturalism, we can as teachers find new and highly effective ways to bridge between the language learning of the classroom and that of authentic adult mainstream institutional roles. It is, after all, these for which we aspire to prepare our students, and the sooner we can get them into these roles, the better.

Yet another way of enabling students to play roles such as those they will need to assume later in life—that of self-assessor—is to allow students to do their own parent-teacher-student conferences. Several teachers across the country have begun working with their classes to have students think through the kinds of questions they believe their parents would want answered regarding school. These are rehearsed and scripted by each student to characterize his or her accomplishments, weaknesses, and areas of strength. On the occasions of parent-teacher conferences, the teacher begins the three-way conversation by offering an evaluation of the student, and the student then takes over, using a formal register in English (if appropriate) to give his or her individual perspective on learning in the classroom. In this way, students take on new roles: They become the observer and reporter of their own academic performance. They must both represent their own interests and convey their understanding of the professional nature of this interaction around their classroom achievements.

THEORIES OF LEARNING AND ENVIRONMENTS OF LEARNING

But do these ideas have any basis in theories of learning or theories that try to understand those features of environments that relate to learning? Let me organize these points into three frames, and around these, let me wrap the theories of learning and teaching of a drama and ESL teacher, Gil Sanchez, of the San Francisco Unified School District, who practices these theories daily in his classrooms.

The theories in capsule form are: multiple voices, cognitive apprenticeship, and play. This last—play—enables both multiple voices and cognitive apprenticeship.

Multiple Voices

This idea comes from the theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, as well as L. S. Vygotsky, whose work has alerted us to the dialogic nature of the creation of meaning. Whenever we speak, we actually talk through the words of ourselves and others—words and phrases that we have heard many times and that become our own when we use them to say new things in what are new times and places (Bakhtin, 1986). To the extent that we can strengthen and make obvious and direct in learning environments this speaking through many voices, we can take advantage of the range of models of English language use that are out there in the real world.

When asked to speak as his favorite football player or television character, the shy ESL student can come forward with astonishing capabilities not demonstrated when asked to answer or to read as himself from the textbook in class. When the adult ESL learner has been asked to record and transcribe some English language instructions as they might be given by the boss of her job as a dishwasher, she can take on an aggressive confidence that is otherwise unsuitable to her cultural background and sense of self as wife and daughter in a traditional extended family from the Caribbean.

Cognitive Apprenticeship

This concept, drawn in part from the work on reciprocal learning of Ann Brown and her colleagues (e.g., Brown & Reeve, 1987) as well as from successful on-the-job learning programs, centers on tasks and problems that give students practice in applying key techniques in diverse settings. The apprenticeship moves forward as the expert learner slowly increases the complexity of tasks. Cognitive apprenticeship works to create a culture of expert practice in which students can

participate and to which they can aspire. Cognitive apprenticeship sets the articulation of abstract principles underlying the application of knowledge and skills into the immediate tasks of different contexts. For example, the power relations between standard and nonstandard English speakers, as an abstract concept, comes alive in the practices of the young people cast as television commentator. A focus on particular words causing trouble carries special meaning when the tape is played back and peers reject particular pronunciations as undesirable for this role.

In cognitive apprenticeship, young people actually “play” at taking on the role of expert after seeing experts model for them. For example, in the work of Elspeth Stuckey, Director of South Carolina’s cross-age tutoring program, she has students who are engaged in tutoring younger students write to her and to other tutors across the state about their sense of what they are doing. These correspondents respond in writing, asking more and more sophisticated questions about the context of the tutoring, how the tutee is integrating reading and writing, what kinds of questions the younger students ask, and how certain additional materials and strategies might work with the younger students. This reflection enables the older students not only to respond to their correspondents’ questions but also to ask questions of their own. They thus formulate questions, summarize, clarify, predict, and plan. Their focus on another student’s learning helps them decompose what is involved in learning language—oral and written, and to turn that reflection not only on the other as learner but also on themselves as learner and as model. Heath and Mangiola (1991) report similar programs of cognitive apprenticeship through tutoring with reflection and analysis in ESL classrooms from primary through adult levels. The dramatic ploy in all of these is that of role shift. Youngsters become something other than their usual student selves within the cross-age tutoring frame. They must play new roles as teachers, mentors, evaluators, and planners; they are accountable in new and different ways—to themselves, to their young charges, and to the adults with whom they must communicate about the achievements of their tutees.

Cognitive apprenticeship also derives much from coinvestigation, a term that some cognitive psychologists have used for encouraging students to reflect both on their existing strategies and the new ones they are acquiring (Scardamalia, Bereiter, & Steinbach, 1984). Within the youth dramas, students must constantly reflect on how they are doing, for their progress hinders or enables the show to move forward. Such work enables students to focus on the subactivities that must work together to create a successful role. Hence, students take apart a complex task for themselves (and with each other) and choose as their

focus discrete elements that make up the task and that need special attention.

Play

It is play—that imaginative frame we all put on certain occasions or aspects of our behavior—that enables both multiple voices and cognitive apprenticeship. The anthropologist Gregory Bateson has defined play as the kind of learning about the self that results in a change in the self (1955). He goes on to explain that play is the unit of interaction of learning that really changes us. When we learn the contexts of life, we have to take on behaviors that enable us to fit ourselves to the ongoing pattern of relationships and also to goals of efficacy—accomplishment in tasks that meet group goals. In play that involves full performance—not just verbal display—both sides of the brain are called on. There is, in the words of the neurologists who study such things “high arousal” that enables the development of a number of communicative skills involved with not only codes but also the frames and metaframes of communication. The self is transformed from the vulnerable, inhibited central self that fears making mistakes into the demands of the character. Thus, as Bateson says, we *are* changed in the frame of play—In being who we are not, we can call upon a full array of skills and features of projection that our nonplaying self would not ordinarily allow. Two or more are certainly, in this case, better than one.

Play is then a frame for action that does not define the actions which are its content and does not obey the ordinary reinforcement rules. Play allows multiple versions of the world.

But theorists can prattle on about such matters of learning and environments of learning. What might a teacher of ESL say? Here I draw from the work of my colleague, Gil Sanchez, who, with his group of ESL learners, presented their work at the 1989 TESOL meetings in San Francisco. There the audience saw his students perform and improvise in a scene, using perfectly understandable English; later the audience addressed questions to the students, who playing themselves now and out of their dramatic roles, faced greater language difficulties.

Sanchez has used drama in his classes for years—as a result of the melding of his theories of learning and his own love of drama. He tells us how he does it. He starts with beginning-level students (no English), asking them to do tableau work—looking, listening, sensing what they are doing in this prelinguistic work. They get their bodies to gesture anger, compassion, mistrust, and gradually they attach language. He combines photos or slides—often of their home country or of settings

or scenes they see in their new environments. They then put two tableaux together through a character moving from one to the other. The next step is to get together to write and "talk" their scripts and to produce two-by-two dramas for the videocamera and then four-by-four dramas for the videocamera, with others helping evaluate.

Sanchez's strategy is to add comprehensible input to a bed of affect that is achievable and demonstrable most easily through another character and not through the immediate vulnerable self. Beginning with the affective and moving to their own scripts ensures that students have a sense of the causes behind what happens and what is said and that they see not only language but other behaviors as symbols. Furthermore, moving in this way with beginning-level students calls on their collective repertoire of language knowledge. They invest in a stake as a community of learners. Aware of each other at a one-on-one level through their dyadic tableaux, they also learn to be aware of their responses to each other through activities stressing synchrony and rhythm. These become meaningful in a new context as the students shift to verbal communication. A sense of synergy is what the students of Sanchez achieve, knowing that the components with which they work will build to be greater than the whole. Finally, all symbol systems are called into play toward a meaningful end.

But you need not take my word or that of Sanchez. Listen to the voices of his beginning-level students after their experience in his class over the semester. He asked them to write in their journals reflections of what they had learned through drama.¹

I learned to work in a group, to coordinate with my fellow students, to have a sense of companionship with them.

I learn how to act and how to dance. . . . I like drama subject because I learn how to speak loud and how to speak English.

I realized that I had learned so much from performances like the history, the stories, the movements, the song, the dances, and we also learned English in that class.

I learned to concentrate better on listening and that I could learn things without being embarrassed.

I learned to be responsible with a group and to integrate and manage the sound equipment. I also learned that in cooperating with the group, I should never be late for practice.

Your imaginary flights have now ended. We have gone to Pirandello's 1920s scene of six actors in search of an author, to inner city

¹ Some students wrote in their L1, some in English. Those not written in English by the students are given here in English translation; those written in English are given just as they were written by the students.