The Role of Drama in Role Play

Introduction

As children engage in role play, they use elements of drama. Drama pedagogy recognises the presence of these elements and presents a theoretical and practical framework within which educators can support and extend children's role play by working from inside children's dramatic interactions. Through the use of drama, children's role, language, imagination and thinking are developed. This chapter encourages educators to recognise the elements of drama evident in children's role play and to work with these elements to strengthen the dramatic texts naturally emerging (Dunn 2011; Dunn and Stinson 2012). Vygotsky emphasises "the dominant role of social experience in human development" (Vygotsky 1978 p. 22), which can be seen as supportive of the use of drama pedagogy as it is based on creating a dramatic frame through which social interactions occur. This approach to extending children's role play is supported by the findings of a study which will be discussed in this chapter. In the study, drama is used as a methodology to affect levels of engagement in sociodramatic play and in drama. The study draws on research by the initiators of sociodramatic play training (Smilansky and Shefatya 1990) and provides quantitative and qualitative results in relation to children aged three to six, in a disadvantaged setting.

The research

The aim of the study was to investigate what happened when children played in a role play area before and after drama experiences which were led by an educator using drama pedagogy. The study initially involved four classrooms in designated economically disadvantaged settings. The children were aged between three and six. There were twenty nine children in the experimental groups (settings A and B) and eight children in the control groups (settings C and D) in which there was no drama intervention. In the experimental groups children participated in ten drama sessions, over ten weeks. The sessions were mostly facilitated by me, a professional drama educator, and at times also led by the children's educators with whom I planned and reflected each week. The children had time before and after drama to play alone. As an extension of the research, reflections on the findings which emerged were used to create drama plans which were then later implemented with twenty eight children in the same age group (setting E).

Research method

Smilansky (1968) and Smilansky and Shefatya's (1990) work originated from their observations "that entire groups of children [from disadvantaged settings] either did not develop this type of play behaviour [sociodramatic play] or did so in a most limited way" (1990, p.xi). During the 1960s Smilansky and Shefatya developed intervention methods intended to improve the quality of children's sociodramatic play. In the decades following they continued to research the significance of children's sociodramatic play and "the feasibility of 'teaching' social make believe play" (1990, p.xii). As part of this research Sara Smilansky (1990) developed The Smilansky Scale which is a criterion referenced scale for assessing dramatic and sociodramatic play. As the study discussed in this chapter was based on the hypothesis that drama pedagogy might improve children's engagement in

sociodramatic play, The Smilansky Scale was selected as an appropriate measurement tool. It was also seen as suitable for application during the drama period as literature on drama (Baldwin 2004; O'Neill and Lambert 1982) indicated that the Smilansky Scale categories correspond in essence to the the elements of drama.

1. "Imitative Role-Play: The child undertakes a make-believe role and expresses it in imitative action and/or verbalization.
2. Make-Believe with objects: Toys, non-structured materials, movements or verbal declarations are substituted for real objects.
3. Make-Believe in regard to actions and situations: Verbal descriptions are substituted for actions and situations.
4. Persistence: The child continues playing in a specific episode for at least ten minutes.
5. Interaction: There are at least two players interacting within the context of a play episode.
6. Verbal communication: There is some verbal interaction relating to the play episode."

(Smilansky and Shefatya 1990, p.238-9)

The Smilansky measurement scale was applied in the period before drama, during drama and after drama in settings A and B. In the control settings of C and D the scale was applied three times and the children were given the same play resources as those available to the children who had experienced the drama session. In order to calculate scores using the scale, detailed observations must be completed. Permission was sought to use video in this study to create verbal and nonverbal data to create a rich, qualitative description which was then also used to provide quantitative results. Children were video recorded playing alone before and after drama, and during drama. Smilansky and Shefatya offer detailed scoring guidelines (1990) which include crucial points which highlight what can be identified as real engagement in sociodramatic play: For example, a child may score in categories one to four but cannot be said to be engaging in socio-dramatic play unless he or she also score in categories five and six. The scale thus emphasises the importance of interaction. In relation to role, if a child simply puts on a hat and announces "I am a builder", he or she would not receive a score. Action associated with the role must take place to achieve a score. Children are scored at five minute intervals, and can be scored a minimum of zero and a maximum of three. Scores were averaged for each of the pre and post intervention periods, regardless of how long each child engaged in role play. Scores were also totalled for the intervention period, as role play is used during the drama session, even though an adult is participating. The names of all participants have been changed.

Quantitative results of the research
The Smilansky scale was completed for the twenty nine children in the experimental study in relation to the play periods before, during and after drama, and the scores for each child were averaged over ten days. The process of averaging can imply less engaged behaviour than actually occurred as a child may score as much as eighteen in one five minute period but then lower scores by less intensely engaged play in another five minute section. A maximum of thirty minutes, or as long as the child played in the role play area, was scored before and after drama. The results are summarised as follows: In the class of children aged four to six, nearly 75% of the children had a higher score in the post drama period, moving from an average of 2.82–4.44. In the preschool group, children peaked in the drama period with an average of 5.2, moving from an average score of 2.8 in the pre drama periods to 3.5 in the post drama period. The scores suggest that the younger, preschool children benefit most from the drama

phase and need the skilled adult dramatist more to engage successfully in play. The older children's improvement post drama suggests that they absorb skills in the drama period which enables them to later play alone. In order to arrive at the Smilansky scale scores, data was compiled for each of the six categories. Role is seen as a fundamental behaviour in drama and play and therefore has a direct impact on the overall scores, as "truly reciprocal role play" (Smilansky and Shefatya 1990, p.248) is required to score highly in the interaction category, which is directly linked to the verbal communication category.

Drama and role play: Conceptions and misconceptions

Lee (Age 5); Tesugi (Age 5) and Hannah (Age 5) are in the role play area of their primary school classroom (setting B) after drama:

> *Lee: "Take your hat off cos we don't know you're the witch. The witch comes back. I'm going home. Tesugi, Tesugi, look! (then puts his hands against the wall as if captured) Pretend we're hiding.' (Then acts as if he is really hiding, crouching down into corner.) 'She might do a spell.' Lee goes over to Hannah and says 'We sit here and you come and do a spell.' Hannah moves over and, pointing her finger says "Alcazam .."*

This is a section of a transcript of a period where children are playing alone in the post intervention period. As Lee plays, he is both playwriting and directing, and doing so from inside the play. The conception of drama pedagogy discussed in this chapter, and used in the intervention phase of the research, is generally referred to as process drama (Dunn 2016; Taylor and Warner 2006). Process drama is seen as closely related to children's role play because it is a process that takes place in an imagined world in which the participants sustain fictional roles and situations (O'Neill 1995, p.xvi). O'Neill adds that the teacher or leader functions within the experience as playwright and participant (1995, p. xvi), just as Lee is doing with his peers. He and his fellow co-constructors are engaging in a drama experience. They are not acting out an existing script or story, instead they are using their engagement in role to create a script. Imagined action and place, and the creation of and engagement in new roles and tensions are seen in the play script which emerges as Lee and his peers play. Drama pedagogy that is conceptualised through an understanding of the process of engagement in a drama experience recognises these elements of drama that are present when children engage in role play.

A common misconception can be to conceptualise drama as theatre only, thus separating it from children's role play and taking a theatrical approach in which an audience is present and an existing script is imposed on the children. Literature supports the idea that when children engage in role play, they move into the dramatic mode. Smilansky and Shefatya categorise this kind of play as dramatic play in which a child uses actions and objects symbolically. They state that sociodramatic play is seen as the most developed form of this play, characterized by interaction between children (1990). They also note that skilled players use dramatic elements in their play such as direction. They do however conceptualise drama as an activity which is separate from play, saying:

"Sociodramatic play should be differentiated from other forms of fantasy behaviour as well as from dramatization of stories" (Smilansky and Shefatya 1990, p. 233).

The term 'dramatization of stories' implies acting out and imitative rather than spontaneous action which are not seen as qualities of meaningful play but nor are they approaches recommended by process drama practitioners. Process drama is primarily an improvised form yet Smilansky and Shefatya (1990, p. 28) caution that that their use of the term 'dramatic', as it is associated with drama, implies fixed roles and plots and a lack of spontaneity and improvisation. Reynolds and Jones (1997, p.1) observe however that when children use role play they are "representing their experiences symbolically in self initiated improvisational drama". They therefore conceptualise children who can behave in this way as master dramatists due to these children's ability to use elements of drama just as a playwright might, as they create characters, define plot, devise props and integrate a variety of scripts (improvised scripts) in pretend play. Bergen also notes elements of drama in children's role play as she states that it "requires the ability to transform objects and actions symbolically; it is furthered by interactive social dialogue and negotiation; and it involves role taking, script knowledge, and improvisation" (2002, p.194).

The rehearsed, audience focussed, performance element of staging a play is the only element of drama which is absent from children's role play, although in a sense they are each other's audience. When children use role in their play, they use action to create meaning, just as great theatre does. Warren (1996) cites Fein's (1987) definition of dramatic play, and she proposes that it can apply to drama in all its forms, whether it is a theatrical production or a drama experience implemented by an educator in an early years setting: "In pretend play one object is used as if it were another, one person behaves as if she were another, and an immediate time and place are treated as if they were otherwise or elsewhere" (1996, p.4). Toye and Prendiville (2000, p. 9) say that "when children are engaged in dramatic play, they create fictional contexts, they use symbols, they take on roles and they generate narrative" and imply that dramatizing is not a skill within dramatic play, but that dramatic play is drama. Imaginative, symbolic, verbal and non-verbal behaviours are increasingly accepted as features of improvisational drama activity at any age (Bowell and Heap 2017). Drama pedagogy is therefore explored in the research as a means of extending children's engagement in role play.

What can drama pedagogy offer?

Adam (Age 4) is in the role play area of the preschool classroom (Setting C):

> *Adam: "Get out of the house, there's fire. You are the fire man, you have to have a hat."*

Adam appears to understand how to create drama. Yet the transcripts indicate that after he says this, nothing happens. He is in the control group in the research which means that no adult works with him to extend his story, and on that day, neither do any children. He is the highest scoring child in the control group but the research shows that he never scores as highly as able children in the experimental group. The celebrated theatre director Peter Brook states (2008) that in a stage space there are two rules, anything can happen and something must happen. The same can be said of a meaningful role play experience. Sometimes however, nothing happens in a role play area. Children put on costumes or turn the knob on a cooker but no further engagement in role nor language related to imagined situations occurs. Drama educators have highlighted the issue of repetition and superficial engagement that

occurs when children are left to play alone (Kitson 2015; Winston and Tandy 2009; Anim-Addo 1990). Repetition in play is beneficial for children to some extent but sometimes it may be that play is not engaging simply because children don't know how to develop the play script. This research, like Smilansky and Shefatya's research, is motivated especially by those who find it difficult to engage in role play.

Vygotskian theory proposes that learning is mediated (Daniels 2016) and that we scaffold learning by assisting (Vygotsky 1978). Nillson and Ferholt (2014) conclude, based on investigation of Vygotsky's theory (1978) in relation to Lindqvist's work (2003; 2001a; 1995) that designing a play pedagogy involves deciding upon the ways that adults will join children in play, not deciding whether or not adults will enter children's play at all. It would seem, given the intuitive use of drama used by children who engage in mature role play, that an educator who understands theoretically and practically how to use drama is the kind of adult who is needed to assist children who need help to develop their role play. Contextualising this within a sociocultural lens, the cultural tools carried by the adult (Veraksa and Sheridan 2018) in this context are the tools of drama. Bodrova (1998) argues however that once an adult engages as a 'player', the experience becomes instructional and takes away the benefits of play, but she acknowledges that not to intervene may mean some children never progress. She advises that "the solution to the problem can be found in designing a tool to support or scaffold play that can later be used by children independently" (Bodrova 1998, p.122). In selecting an intervention tool, the challenge then is to maintain the experience as agentic and co-constructed so that children are scaffolded in the skills they will need to later contribute to role play without help from a capable adult. The beliefs and values of drama pedagogy position the participants as central to the construction of the drama experience. Drama pedagogy explicitly seeks to create powerful experiences in role in an imagined context and encourages participants to generate their own narratives. Therefore, drama can support children to later play alone with more experience of being in role in an interactive, story making context. This can support children like Adam to be more able to sustain his play scripts and for other children to be more able to respond to his interactions.

Engaging in role: Who will we be?

Callum (Age 4) is in the role play area in his preschool classroom (Setting A):

> Callum:"Will we play nurses?" After taking more things out of the doctor's kit he says to me: "You have to ring me. You have to say "(changing his voice) who's this?" .

Callum is playing alone in the role play area here in a pre intervention period in the research but he still seeks to place me in role in order to develop his play script. A lot of the children in the research do this, indicating that children notice when adults are willing to engage in role and seek out their involvement. The planning of the drama intervention phase of the research specifically requires the educator to consider roles. A key question when planning drama is, just as Callum tries to decide, who will we be? The roles can arise from the context, just as Callum's doctor's kit suggests a context and related roles to him. The use of drama can prompt a search beyond roles that are related only to replica toys in order to extend thinking and imagination, and it is worth noting here Smilansky and Shefatya's observation (1990, p.56) that children from lower socio economic groups show an over reliance on toys in

their play. As Corsaro notes (2012, p.494), in dramatic play "children's appropriation and embellishment of adult behavior primarily concerns status, power, and control". The purpose of asking who we will be is to guide the drama educator towards fictional contexts in which children will have collective power and responsibility. It is helpful because considering the question fully might, for example, indicate that a role play area set up as Santa's workshop may not offer a lot of potential for meaningful role play. This is because there are limited opportunities for people to be, other than Santa's helpers. The role does not offer much opportunity for power as the main activity tends to be wrapping presents. This creates a focus on things to do rather than people to be, suggests little verbal interaction, and according to the Smilansky scale, it is not scorable role or make believe behaviour. Smilansky and Shefatya's research led them to conclude that children at a lower socio economic level gain satisfaction "from doing what adults do" (1990, p.58) while they noted that children at a higher economic level may gain satisfaction from imitation but try to move to a level at which they are "experiencing what adults are like and feel like" (1990, p.58). Drama pedagogy is explicitly concerned with moving participants into experiential rather than imitative role through engagement in imagined contexts.

As well as considering potential roles for children, the drama educator considers carefully what role he or she might take, always with the purpose of deepening engagement in the experience for all participants. In essence, the play strategy of the educator who participates in role with the purpose of challenging and extending from within is the same as the drama convention of teacher in role. Warren (1996) believes that the drama process can transfer power to children in a developmentally appropriate manner because children can decide what will happen and when. According to Lindqvist, Vygotsky "senses a longing on the part of the children to move closer to the adult world" (Lindqvist 1995, p. 50). In choosing a role to play, the drama educator selects a role which will offer children opportunities to have adult responsibilities and to drive the action. Examples used in my study include a queen, which may seem high status, but she wants to visits the children's park which they are in charge of; a giant who wants to make friends and a king who needs the help of the king's men to ensure that Humpty Dumpty doesn't fall off the wall again. The transcripts from the research suggest that roles which engage children and give them power mean that they are often more likely to use language and action which develops the play script and as a result is more constructive and empathetic. An educator in setting A made this comment about a drama session in which the children met a character called Mary who had a fall: "Maybe because she hurt her knee and she needed their help that sensitive side came out, and you needed that help from them, it brought them on board." The adult role chosen in planning the drama experience had the purpose of deepening the context of hospital role play. Corsaro observes that role play "involves learning about the relationship between context and behavior" (2012, p.499) so such experiences of powerful roles in which problems are encountered and solved by children may explain their raised scores in the study.

Make believe with actions and situations: What will happen?

Robbie (Age 4) is in the role play area of a preschool classroom (Setting A) with four other children during a drama intervention based on The Three Little Pigs:

Robbie goes away and comes back with imaginary dinner for the adult in role as the wolf who is staying for tea. At first I don't see him and he remains standing with his hands held out with the 'dinner'. Robbie says "here you go". I take food from Samantha, Danny and Kirk. As Robbie waits, he begins to look anxious that I am not going to take his food. When I do he looks happier.

When I reviewed the video footage of this section of this drama intervention period which occurred early in the study, I reflected on a number of elements which were evident. Bodrova outlines the three components that Vygotsky asserted are essential for play: "Children create an imaginary situation; they take on and act out roles and they follow a set of rules determined by specific roles" (Bodrova 2008, p359). Robbie is showing he can do this but not with ease. Robbie's apparent anxiety cautioned me to be more watchful for those who particularly need their interactions in role validated. He is showing that he understands the rules of the imagined situation as he is using his hands symbolically to represent the dinner. Yet a further examination of early transcripts which include Robbie showed that generally, he didn't move beyond imagined action into sustained verbal engagement in role. He especially didn't do so without a collaborator, and it was usually an adult who engaged him. He seemed to enjoy being part of the peer culture created in role play (Corsaro 2003) even if he struggled with sustaining a play script. As Ryabkova; Smirnova and Sheina (2017) show, children often struggle with creating or sustaining the imagined situation. Robbie's average scores across ten pre drama periods and ten post drama periods went up by fifty per cent, indicating that the use of drama helped him to engage more meaningfully in imagined situations. I made the following notes based on video footage:

Robbie enjoyed entering and exiting the 'door' in the area and this seemed to create some imaginary context for him but in general he did not move beyond role announcement or isolated role engagement in these pre intervention phases.

Then later in the study, I noted that as Robbie's confidence in sociodramatic play grew during the study, he seemed to understand that just as the educator pretended sometimes, he could too. He seemed to respond to the emotional and social dimension of the interaction and quickly became involved, watching closely when the adult entered into a role and then using that as a springboard for his own engagement in role. He increasingly took power roles in the play such as a police man and a taxi driver taking a large group on a holiday.

Inherent within drama pedagogy is the idea that problems and tensions occur (Heathcote 2015; Toye and Prendiville 2000) which develop the action, thus ensuring that something happens and empowering children to resolve the dilemma. The research did suggest that for some children, tensions could not be too complex as, if they couldn't resolve the tension in some way (like Robbie who almost didn't succeed in feeding the visitor his dinner), they might be discouraged from engagement. More able children intuitively include tensions into their play scripts. The insertion of well chosen tensions enrich play because, as an educator in setting A observed, a lack of tension limits the potential for the development of the situation. Reflecting on an enactment of the nursery rhyme 'Miss Polly had a Dolly' she said: "Without tension it's resolved, isn't it? In Miss Polly the doctor comes, he writes a prescription and off he goes. Having something with that tension, or element of the unexpected is good". The insertion of unexpected tensions also encourages children to "explore what they do not know

rather than re-enact what they *do* know" (O' Neill 1982 p. 21). Ferholt (2007) outlines Vygotsky's argument that the child's experience is not as expansive as that of adults and therefore, "(t)he child can imagine vastly less than the adult." (Vygotsky 2004, p.29). This suggests that the adult can imagine what might happen in the play scenarios children wish to develop and help them to voice their internal thoughts. Through the use of drama, we can work inside the imagined situation to collaboratively drive the action forward and ensure that something happens.

Drama pedagogy in action: What does it look like?

Boulton and Ackroyd (2004, p.2) believe that when working alongside children in role, using drama pedagogy, the adult can structure children's contributions, create appropriate atmospheres, provide challenges and create situations that demand language, understanding and empathy. Each drama intervention during the research was planned with those goals in mind. The one described here was an extension of the original research and was planned in a way which sought to include learning generated by the results of the transcripts and scores generated by the Smilansky scale application, and thus test the applicability and transferability of the initial findings. The children (in Setting E, aged 5 and 6) had been reading the story of the *Owl Babies* (Waddell and Benson 2002) in which Mother Owl is nowhere to be seen and her babies are missing her. The initial question is what, if any, connection could be made to the role play area. An online search revealed that the popular answer is to set up the role play areas as a tree house for the babies. This suggested however that the role the children might take is that of the owl babies, with perhaps one of them as the mother. The use of drama pedagogy prompted a move beyond story enactment to consider who else the children might be and how they might potentially have a higher status and a more powerful role. For this reason, when the drama session began, the children were welcomed as people who work in the wood. Accepting that this is a role beyond their experience, in role as fellow wood keeper, I reminded the children of some of the jobs that they did. These jobs were deliberately physical to encourage children to make believe with objects, actions and situations, even those who were less verbal than others. Together we fed imagined animals, built imagined houses for animals, looked through imagined binoculars, cleaned up imagined litter and chopped down imagined trees. Working together we developed a sense that we were collectively responsible for the wood and talked about what we saw, who we were feeding and wondered if we should be chopping down trees! One child built a treehouse that "went up to heaven"; another talked about how he didn't want to scare the animals; others talked about the wolves, foxes and red ants, bears, ducks, tigers and chickens that we saw in the wood as we worked. As we used our imagined binoculars, one child decided that he could see the moon. This created an impetus to move silently and speak softly as it was night time in our wood. This early section of the drama work had the purpose of establishing an acceptance that we didn't need real objects to be in our wood and that we would work together to actively create what happened there. It was also to create belief and investment (Baldwin 2004) in the context of the play script that was evolving.

When using drama pedagogy, the educator ensures that dilemmas are presented in order to challenge and engage. In this 'Owl Babies' drama work, in order to introduce the problem, a letter came. Letters are a useful way of introducing the element of tension even if children

are not yet reading. Throughout the research children responded to letters which were found, or came by special delivery with curiosity and often made up their contents. On this occasion the letter was from the babies themselves, asking for help to find their mother. One child said "we can't leave them on their own, maybe a fox took their mum" and encouraged the others to get involved in addressing the problem. At that point one child suggested that we should handcuff someone, which is the kind of occurrence that can present a challenge to the educator. If children decide that someone should be handcuffed or killed off (as is often the case), it can seem overly adult led to disallow such a plot development. Yet sustaining the play script is a goal which is in the interests of the children, and if killing people will mean that the play is truncated, then it is worth circumventing. The answer usually lies in the evolving story. For example, here we talked about the fact that at that moment, we didn't know who to handcuff as we didn't know what had happened, and that maybe we should find Mother Owl first. The research indicated that sometimes children kill someone in role play because they can't think of anything else to do, so it is worth at least investigating whether the use of drama strategies can engage in a different direction. Here, I had prepared a map (simply drawn) of the wood and we went on a journey to the places we thought that the Mother Owl might be. This was a strategy that proved engaging as it was visual and active as well as allowing opportunities for new thinking and discussions that emerged as we travelled, such as whether she had fallen into the water.

Although we worked in role throughout the session, towards the end a specific role was selected with the objective of challenging the children. I took the role of a crow who explained that he had a fight with the Mother Owl. The children told the crow that he was evil and generally denounced him for not being sorry and for what he had done. One child said "if you don't get Mother Owl back here we'll have to get her ourselves". The crow suggested that that is what they should do, as in drama the purpose of teacher in role is to create challenges and extend the tension. The crow does not feature in the original story but was used here to add an element of tension and surprise. Children easily accepted afterwards that the adult was no longer the crow and was someone else in the drama now, as the ability to move in and out of roles is a rule which governs both play and drama. At this point I helped them to think of a chant which might help to call back Mother Owl, which had the purpose of extending their use of language. Together we called, first soft and then loud and then used a Mother Owl puppet that had been hidden to dramatise the return. Indicating belief in the drama, one boy said accusingly "we were trying to find you!" Another explained to her patiently, based on the journey that we had taken earlier in the drama, how she might get back to the tree where she lived. Another boy explained to her that her babies were crying and that she really should have said where she was going. Through drama, the context was widened, enabling more complex dramatic interactions than if the children had been in role as the babies.

Interactions in play, drama and language

Fromberg (2001, p.43) notes that "the adult who can enter seamlessly into young children's oral playwriting demonstrates respect and validates the children's power to engage in this collaborative narrative". The use of drama in the study is advocated in the context of its theoretical and practical framework it provides for collaborative playwriting with children. In considering children's development, meaningful dramatic interactions are prioritised by the work of Vygotsky (1978; 2004) and Smilanksy and Shefatya (1990). This is echoed by drama

educators: Bowell and Heap point out that educational drama "is a collective, social art form which is created by participants working collaboratively" (2013, p.40). Emphasising the connection between interaction and language, O' Neill states that language is central to drama as it "arises out of a genuine need to speak" (1977 p.7). The video footage in the research suggested that, during the drama sessions, there was a strength of emotion evident at times which seemed to motivate language. After a drama in which children in role as doctors helped the adult in role as a sick lady who had fallen on the road, one of the setting educators commented: "I mean Damian was really there, really helping you out, really intense" and another added "Yes, you could feel it!". Ferholt interprets Vygotsky's work as implying that "cognition and emotion are dynamically related" (2015, p. 62) and she refers to the Russian concept of *perezhivanie* which is discussed by Vygotsky, who says that the emotional experience (*perezhivanie*) of a child is key in determining the impact of a situation or an environment of the child (1990). Emotional experience is central to drama pedagogy "but it is tempered with thought and planning" (Heathcote 2015, p. 53). Perezhivanie is a concept which is noted as having particular relevance to drama processes (John-Steiner 2015) The research showed that ideas and emotional experiences that were encountered in the drama period were then reshaped and incorporated into sociodramatic play later, thus developing language. The experience of the drama was drawn on by children to create their own imagined situations, and in doing so, they used the culture of the drama experience. An example of this can be seen in the play script of Hannah:

Hannah (Age 5) is in the role play area (Setting C) with one other child after a drama intervention based on Jack and The Beanstalk.

> *Hannah: "Ok ok, I'm on my way. Someone's dying in a hostipal (sic), I have to hurry!...Nobody's coming....I have to get all our plates done cos the man is coming in five minutes to see the beanstalk! Look, the beanstalk is ready. Pretend that I'm Jack....What's your name going to be in this?"*

She incorporates a new tension of a sick patient (perhaps from her own experience) into the frame experienced in drama of growing a beanstalk. She takes the role of Jack (whom she met in drama) but also incorporates the action of washing up, related perhaps to a caring role. She introduces a new role, and tension, of a visitor who wants to see the imagined beanstalk, and inserts the script development that the beanstalk has grown. She interacts with her peer by speaking to him in role and outlining the rules of sociodramatic play. All of this inspires language.

Conclusion

Vygotsky stresses that, in learning processes, "an interpersonal process is transformed into an intrapersonal one" (1978, p.57). This small scale study suggests that when an adult with a theoretical and practical understanding of drama interacts with children using drama as a method, children's experience and knowledge of how to participate in sociodramatic play is developed. The more challenging dramatic experience shared with the adult then enables them to further their own play based imaginative actions and interactions. Drama extends their experiences by sustaining dramatic interactions which are imaginatively more expansive. As the adult co-constructs with children, roles emerge which suggest new ways of

thinking, being and actively solving problems with others in role. Fleer (2015) finds that the predominant mode of interaction in the play-based settings in her study is to monitor or supervise children's play and that "having an adult inside of children's play does not appear to be a standard conceptualisation of the role of teacher in the pedagogical practice of supporting children's play" (2015, p. 1810). Drama pedagogy can be seen as a useful element of play pedagogy because it works within the frame and structure of children's dramatic play to challenge and extend what occurs. The adult using drama remains concerned with children's desire to play but guides using knowledge and practice of the elements of dramatic interactions. In this way children are supported to engage in role in a collaborative context so they can explore what they know and what they do not, through the medium of drama.

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