Developing Learner Autonomy in a Drama Approach to Language Learning

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Abstract: This paper explores the theoretical and practical connections between a drama approach to learning and the fostering of learner autonomy in the language learning process. Stemming from a belief that a drama approach naturally lends itself to the development of individual and interactive autonomy, the paper considers principles and practical applications of such a connection, before describing how a combined approach is currently being used at a women's university in Japan.

An important conclusion concerns the role of the teacher in this environment: this kind of approach requires the teacher to step back from proactive 'direction' to a more facilitative role, which nonetheless demands that students make clear and explicit decisions for themselves.

1. Introduction

The use of drama in the foreign language classroom is not at all new. From the early twentieth century, when Caldwell Cook was pioneering the use of Drama as an approach in the general subjects classroom, EFL teachers have been quick to avail themselves of the tools that a Drama approach offered, 'influenced by the progress of psychology . . . to realize that *play* in itself was valuable- that a child *playing* is a child learning.' (Courtney, 1965: iii)

While Cook's *The Play Way* (1917) was to become 'the foundation on which teachers of Drama have built their principles and methods' (Courtney, 1965) in general education in the UK, the EFL profession has drawn from a wider range of drama techniques and approaches, indicative of the range of 'methodologies' in use in the profession as a whole. Drama approaches of one sort of another have long been used in EFL in Japan: leading proponents over the last two or three decades, for example, have been Yoko Nomura-Narahashi (Nomura, 1980; Narahashi, 1981), whose Model Language Studio (MLS), founded in 1974, is still going strong; Richard Via (Via, 1976; Via and Smith, 1983), who has worked extensively

with MLS; and, more recently, Theo Steckler and others in the *Dramaworks* group (e.g. Steckler and Franklyn, 2000; Steckler and Fujiwara, 2004).

It is therefore important not to talk of The Drama Method or to talk of drama as if this referred to a single approach or methodology: it clearly does not. However, it is not the purpose of this paper to define different drama methods, or to promote the claims of one method over another. My purpose is rather to consider how a drama approach, in the broadest sense of the term, might relate to elements of the second language acquisition (SLA) process: more specifically, to explore the theoretical and practical connections between such an approach and the fostering of learner autonomy in the language learning process.

This exploration stems from a) a view of learner autonomy as an essential part of effective language learning, indeed an important pillar and goal of the educational process in general; and b) my own sense that a drama approach, by its very nature, lends itself readily to the development of individual and interactive autonomy. This is **not** to claim that any activity given the label of Drama automatically leads to learner autonomy, that the equation

doing drama = greater learner autonomy

is necessarily constant or always true. It can and should

be true, but for the equation to work the two halves must be based on mutually-compatible *principles* and *practical applications.* They must also be critically evaluated in the context of the equation, that is of their compatibility.

The paper begins, then, by looking briefly at each half of the equation:

> What does/might a *drama approach to language learning* entail?
>
> What do/might we understand by *learner autonomy?*

Common threads, both theoretical and practical, are then drawn out, leading to a description of and rationale for such a combined approach which has been used in two different women's universities in Japan: beginning with explorations of how meaning is conveyed, leading to a connected series of activities grounded in the principles and practice of the two halves of the equation, drama and learner autonomy.

2. Drama and Learner Autonomy: Some Principles

What does/might *a drama approach* entail?
This is not an attempt at a detailed definition, or a description of specific techniques, but rather a brief attempt to give a sense of the thinking and some principles behind drama as an educational approach.

A drama approach to EFL can mean a whole range of different things, depending on a teacher's beliefs and experience. It could mean a fully-rehearsed (and fully-costumed, fully-lit) performance, different types of role-play with varying degrees of control, 'dressing up', improvisation, 'playing around' or — for the less enthusiastic — 'just another method'. It *can,* in different hands, be any one of those. Whatever the technique, however, drama as an educational tool stems essentially from Dewey's concept of 'learning by doing' (Courtney, 1965: iii), which is what inspired Cook's (1917) belief that '[p]roficiency and learning come not from reading and listening but from action, from *doing,* and from experience'.

Drama is about *how* rather than *what* — the active, engaged process of 'doing', rather than just objectively observing, as a more effective means of learning. Of course, this does not mean that the *what* is unimportant. There may be times when the end product is an essential goal — process and product are not polarized opposites (Moody, 2002: 135) — but the focus of drama is on the process, on 'learning by doing'. One implication of this is that learners are more subjectively involved in what is happening:

> Dramatic play is a very personal thing. It is vital, alive and 'real' to the individual who is pursuing it. In one degree or another, it represents the individual's view of life: the child playing 'mothers and fathers' is presenting her way of looking at mothers and fathers. The later developments of dramatic play, whether as a youth or an adult, are no less vital a part of the inner life. Courtney (1965, p. 3)

Such personal engagement is also likely to be more interesting for learners, whatever their age. Drama can and should be fun: it 'has a difficult-to-resist seductive power that the less proficient students accept as a challenge' (Miccoli, 2003: 123). In such a context, learners are actively engaged in their own learning and, if handled correctly, they can have greater control over their own learning too. To talk of giving learners increased control, of course, connects to a central concern of learner autonomy.

What do/might we understand by *learner autonomy?*
Again, it is not the intention here to present a detailed definition or description of learner autonomy in language learning. It is an area which is increasingly seen as an important part of the ongoing debate on a theory of SLA and one which reflects a growing concern with what individual learners bring to the SLA process. More detailed discussions of the principles behind and issues arising from the question of learner autonomy can be found in, for example, Little (1991, 2000) and Benson (1996, 2001), but for the purposes of this paper, I will suggest a few characteristics which seem to me to connect strongly with the kind of thinking which has informed the development of educational drama:

> • Autonomy is concerned with *giving learners control:* that is, control over their own learning, over the decisions connected with what and how they learn. It is 'a *capacity* — for detachment, critical reflection,

decision-making and independent action. . . . The capacity for autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to wider contexts.'   (Little, 1991: 4)

- *Reflecting critically* on one's own learning is an essential element of autonomy and will therefore be a feature, in some form, of any approach which legitimately claims to develop autonomy in learners.

- Part of the process of fostering autonomy in language learners is to show them that they are able to take control and to help them develop that ability. Giving control to learners does not entail teachers abdicating responsibility, but rather working to help learners develop the capacity to take increasing control for their own learning.

- While autonomy involves moving away from dependence, it does not imply complete independence from others: such detachment 'is a determining feature not of autonomy but of autism' (Little, 1991: 5). As social beings, autonomy is essentially set in a context of *interdependence,* of working together but respecting the individuality of others. (Brown, 2003)

Autonomy and Drama

It seems to me, then, that are several important characteristics which a *drama* approach and a *learner autonomy* approach to language learning have in common. Some of these characteristics are quite explicit; others can be implicitly inferred from the features I have noted. All of them have clear practical implications for how a drama approach might work in a learner autonomy context in the classroom.

Perhaps the most central common characteristics are the notions of learner control, interdependence and critical reflection.

- **Learner control** One of the assumptions behind a drama approach is that there are things which learners know *as human beings* (rather than as learners) which they can contribute to the learning process. They may not be expert in the language they are learning, but they know about people: about how we interact, feel and engage with each other as social beings; about how we react to different situations and experiences. This knowledge of people is something that they bring to the classroom and which seems compatible with the notion of learners taking increased control of their learning experience: their 'human knowledge' offers them the power to take greater control.

- **Interdependence** Understanding of humans as social beings leads naturally to the notion of interdependence. By its very nature, drama is a group-oriented activity: the whole concept of 'learning by doing' involves working together with other learners, whether individually or in groups. As such it is ideally suited to the interactive and interdependent context of an autonomous classroom.

- **Critical reflection** The kind of critical reflection essential to learner autonomy can and should be a natural part of a drama approach. Learners need to reflect, with help, on the shared human knowledge they bring to the classroom, on personal relations in communicative situations, in order to move forward the drama they are engaged in and fully understand the issues involved.

These characteristics indicate the need to include, at all stages of the classroom process, learner choice, learner reflection, interactive learner engagement and the learners' point of view.

The corollary of this, of course, is that there are also clear implications for the role of the teacher. In such a grounded approach, where a degree of learner choice and control are so central, the teacher's role would *not* mean directing or 'showing them how': '[s]tudents . . . are allowed to interpret the lines as they see fit according to the given circumstances' (Via and Smith, 1983: xv). Directing, in the traditional stage drama sense, would merely negate learner choice and interactive engagement.

What is required of the teacher is a shift towards a less directive role, towards the teacher as facilitator. This is in many ways, perhaps, an overused and imprecise phrase, but the implied role is that of encouraging, drawing out students' 'human knowledge' through questions, rather than supplying ready-made answers to issues which students have not had time to engage with. This may be instinctively difficult for teachers who like to be in control and might seem to be a recipe for a lack of purpose and

focus in the classroom. However, a less directive role does not mean allowing a free-for-all. The teacher-as-facilitator should still be challenging for students, in the sense that rigorous demands are made of them to make explicit decisions and choices regarding the drama (a notion discussed in a more detailed practical context below). Not being 'directive' does not mean that there is no direction — but that the teacher is demanding greater *self*-direction from students.

3. Drama and Autonomy in Practice

3. 1 Groundwork

How then would such an approach work in practice? I use the approach at a women's university in western Japan: each semester, around twenty second-year students (19–20 years old) take the course. The class meets around twelve times: the course is designed to move from small to larger drama projects, and from less to greater learner control as it progresses. (The timings that follow are approximate and will vary from class to class.)

Warming-up (*Weeks 1–2*)

Warming-up exercises are common in the language classroom, as well as the drama classroom. They are mentioned just briefly here, as they are not the main focus of the paper, but it needs to be said that they form an integral part of the course, particularly in the early stages. I am referring not only to brief activities at the start of lessons to activate students, but also to a larger-scale 'warm-up' in the context of the whole semester. Near-adult students cannot leap into drama without some kind of psychological preparation, so much of the first week or two of the course is spent in activities designed to lay the groundwork for the kind of collaboration, interaction and interdependent decision-making which will be demanded of students in the course. The aim, as Dougill (1987: 9) puts it, is 'to foster a climate of trust, awareness and group cohesion in which creative collaboration can take place' and 'to focus participants' minds on the matter in hand'. And, of course, to have fun and develop the notion that drama is something to be enjoyed, not suffered.

Warm-up activities in the first two weeks include *Charades* (using gestures to elicit items of vocabulary — adjectives, people, places . . .); *Eye-contact* (experimenting to find the optimum length of time for making eye-contact in group situations, before discomfort or embarrassment sets in); *Group Charades* (creating meaningful shapes, structures and combinations in groups of two or three, to elicit items of vocabulary); and *Show-and-Tell* — as well as experimenting with brief dialogues.

Meaning: where does it come from?

An important initial part of enabling learners to take a degree of control in the course is to help them explore the question of meaning: where does it come from? In other words, drawing out their understanding of how meaning is constructed and communicated — or, from the opposite perspective, how it is perceived and understood. In the belief that giving learners a voice entails encouraging reflection on the 'human knowledge' they bring to the classroom, the initial warm-up phase of the course is followed by a reflective session on the construction and perception of meaning, before moving on to the drama core of the course.

This should not involve lengthy discussions, but can be done in a fairly simple way. I first begin with the question(s): Where/what does meaning come from? What do we use to communicate meaning to each other? The answer *words* usually emerges quite quickly, so that we can produce an initial diagram something like this:

Words ⟶ **MEANING**

But are words all we need to produce and understand meaning? Students are then given the following exchanges with the attached questions to consider:

1. A: I love you.
   B: I love you too.
   Who are A and B?
   Is the nuance of this exchange always the same?
   Why/how would it change?
2. A: Don't be angry.
   B: I'm not angry.
   Is B angry? How do we know?
3. A: Salt.
   B: OK.
   Does this communication work?
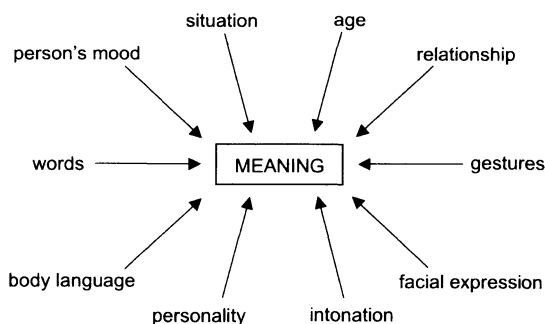   *What does this mean? What information do we need*

FIGURE 1   Constructing and understanding meaning: diagram by one group of students (April 2005)

to understand it?

4. A: You love me, don't you?

   B: Yeh, I really love you.

   Does B love A?

   How do we know? How can we change the nuance?

5. A: How lovely to see you again!

   Is A happy to see the other person?

   How do we know? How can we change the nuance?

Discussion of these exchanges leads to a list of other elements which are important in the construction and perception of meaning, so that we can produce a more comprehensive diagram. Figure 1 was produced by one group of students in April 2005 and includes both *contextual* elements which will refine and constrain meaning (situation, age, relationship) and *expressive* elements which convey meaning (gesture, intonation, facial expression). The elements could be differently articulated and differently arranged by another group of students and the list is not exhaustive, but that is not the intention: there is no single 'correct' answer. The purpose is to enable students to reflect on possible elements as a prelude to them beginning to make their own choices and decisions.

3. 2 On with the Drama: three projects

Project 1: 'Erm . . .' (*Week 3*)

Immediately after the reflection on how meaning is constructed and understood, we move on to a first short scene, 'Erm . . .'. Students divide themselves into pairs, A and B; As and Bs gather separately and are given their own half of the dialogue, as follows:

As are given:

> A
>
> A: Erm . . . I've got something important to tell you.
> B: . . . .
> A: You won't get angry, will you?
> B: . . . .
> A: Well, you see, I'm . . . pregnant.
> B: . . . .
> A: You said you wouldn't get angry.
> B: . . . .

Bs are given:

> B
>
> A: . . . .
> B: What is it?
> A: . . . .
> B: No of course not.
> A: . . . .
> B: What?
> A: . . . .
> B: I'm not angry. I'm just . . . shocked.

After a brief vocabulary check (the only potential hurdle might be *pregnant,* which is easily dealt with), students then return to their pair. At this stage, we use an approach based on Via and Smith (1983: xiv–xvi). Students are asked not to memorize their lines, but to read each line silently before delivering it; when A delivers the first line, A and B should be looking at each other; B does not read her opening line until A has finished; then B looks at her line before delivering it in the same way. There are two important points here:

1. Students are not reading aloud, but reading to process each line and then delivering it with what they consider to be appropriate intonation, expression and delivery.
2. Listening to their partner is vital. They do not look at or prepare their next line until they have heard their partner's line. Their reaction to the line will then feed into their own delivery of the next line.

As Via and Smith (1983: xv) note, 'Students are not asked to express joy, anger, or any specific emotion', but rather to react as they think appropriate. In their pairs, they are free to then 'practise' the dialogue two or three times, to refine the delivery of lines and their reactions.

I do not follow Via and Smith's approach completely. The need to increase learner control and choice does not fully fit with their advice that

The more information students are given concerning the who, what, when, where and why, the better they will be able to interpret the lines. We must be careful to be explicit when giving this information.

Via and Smith (1983: xv)

However, although the focus on learners making decisions argues against unilaterally giving them such explicit information, we can and should still demand that students themselves be explicit in the choices they make regarding the situation, reaction, intonation and so on, so that their choices are appropriate for the lines and for their shared human knowledge.

This means that with the 'Erm . . .' dialogue, for example, I ask one pair to show the class their version of the dialogue and then ask them and the whole group, "Who are A and B? What is the relationship between them?" Usually, though not always, the first answer is *a young couple, boyfriend and girlfriend.* "How old are they?" *They're university students:* the students are making a potential personal connection with the characters. I then ask, "Are any other situations or relationships possible for this same dialogue?" and other possibilities begin to emerge: mother and daughter, father and daughter and so on. Students are then asked to think of as many different contexts as possible for the dialogue, being as explicit as they can about the situations and relationships. They practice two or three different versions, with appropriate delivery, voice and actions before each pair presents one version to the rest of the class, who must try and identify the situation and relationship from the 'performance'.

In other words, although the teacher is not specifically 'directing', students are required to make explicit choices; lack of direction does not mean lack of rigour.

Situations which students have come up with include:

• Young couple (their age, or younger . . .)
• Mother and daughter
• Father and daughter — a very different dynamic!
• Office affair
• Friends — B can't believe how stupid her friend has been
• Mother and daughter — the mother's pregnant
• Husband & wife — married for two or three years, they're happy

• Husband and wife — happy, having tried unsuccessfully for children for many years and given up
• Low income couple who already have ten children

Again, this is not an exhaustive list, but it shows that students are capable of making choices.

After showing their dialogues, each pair are asked to write a detailed reflective comment in their notebooks, recording what they did during the class, the specific decisions they made and their reflections on their efforts to communicate the nuances of the situation: Was it difficult /easy? What did they find difficult? This written reflection is something which continues throughout the course from this point on and provides another reason for making their earlier choices regarding their 'performance' as explicit as possible: they act as a reference point, a set of criteria for later reflection. (This is a question which will be explored further below.)

Project 2: 'A Romantic Dinner' (*Weeks 4–7*)

The next stage of the course is a three-week project based around a longer script, 'A Romantic Dinner'. Students are actually given the first part of the script, and are required (in groups of two or three) to complete it and prepare for a videoed performance without scripts in week 6, with a self-review follow-up in week 7. The script, together with some reflective questions, is as follows:

A ROMANTIC DINNER
An Italian Restaurant. Soft music, candlelight, a table for two . . .
John and Sue are eating dinner.

J: This spaghetti's delicious.
S: Yes. And the restaurant's nice too. Very romantic.
J: Yes.
　(*Pause*)
　Sue —
S: Yes?
J: Oh, nothing.
　(*Pause*)
J: Er, Sue . . .
S: Mm?
J: I've got something very important to ask you. (He takes a ring box from his pocket.) You see, I love you very much Sue and —
S: Wait a minute John! There's something I must tell you first.
J: What?
S: Oh dear, I don't know how to explain —
J: What is it? Tell me!
S: Well . . .

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How does John feel about Sue?
What does he plan to ask her?
How does he feel at the beginning of the conversation?

How does Sue feel when John takes the ring box from his pocket?
What do you think she is going to tell him?
How does John feel at this point?

The script offers enough to establish the basic situation and to give some pointers about the personalities and relationship involved. With Sue's intriguing 'Wait a minute John! There's something I must tell you first,' it offers possibilities for what will happen next, but is open enough to allow students to be imaginative in creating their script. The script should be completed in the first week (Week 4), for homework if necessary; checked and rehearsed in the second week; and then, in the third week, with intensive practice between classes, each pair presents their piece. Each group is required to write a brief reflective comment in the first two weeks, recording the decisions they have made regarding the script, describing the kind of emotions the characters undergo and explaining the challenges they faced in portraying those emotions.

Again, in order for the learners to take some control and make their own choices, the teacher's role is to encourage, to draw out rather than direct. Students are free to have whatever kind of ending they choose — happy, sad, comic, tragic, mysterious — and are encouraged to think for themselves what feelings the characters would be undergoing. They need to consider the changing emotions as the script proceeds and ensure that the script flows naturally, matching emotional changes without ending abruptly or unnaturally. The task of the teacher is to challenge students to keep to these constraints.

As for the rehearsals, the same principles apply: the emotions that students have identified in their script need to be the focus of their practice; the teacher needs to keep their attention on that issue, asking 'What emotion are you trying to show here? Are you being successful?' To reinforce this, and to give students a sense of audience, the final 15–20 minutes of the second week of the project (Week 5) are spent showing their partly-rehearsed piece to another group and receiving constructive advice.

In the third week (Week 6), students are expected to be engaged not only in their own performance but also in the presentations of other groups. Each group completes an evaluation sheet for the other performances. Specific areas for evaluation are *voice* (intonation, projection . . .), *visual* (gestures, body language . . .) and *content* (story, dialogue . . .), but students are also asked to write general comments under two headings: good points and things to improve. These sheets are later handed to the groups concerned, so students are free to write in Japanese, but they are told that their comments should be constructive and detailed. Writing *It was very good,* for example, is not very useful. Why was it good? Specifically what were the strong points? Likewise, *It was terrible* or *I didn't like it* are not very constructive comments. Comments should suggest ways to improve, rather than being judgmental: *Your voices were difficult to hear* or *I couldn't understand what happened at the end, so you need to make it clearer* and so on. Again, the focus is on challenging students to be explicit and detailed in their reflections.

As a follow-up to these presentations, the short performances (around 5 minutes each) are videoed and are viewed the following week (Week 7) to facilitate the students' self-evaluation. After watching the video, students work together to complete a reflective evaluation sheet, which asks them to pick out any key comments from the evaluation they received from other groups the previous week and to give their own reaction to these, as well as to their performance. The criteria are the same, but the area of focus is wider, including the script (Were they happy with it? Could they improve it? How smooth was the script-writing process? . . .) and the practice (How did they practise? How often? Was it effective? Could they improve the way they practise? . . .), as well as the performance itself. The self-evaluation is intended to be formative, focusing on improving and planning for the future, rather than summative and judgmental.

Project 3: The Final Countdown (*Weeks 7–12/13*)

The final project is longer and more open-ended. In groups of 4–5, students write a script around 10–15 minutes long and perform it. They are given a free hand in choosing the kind of script, but to help them in the decision-making process, they are given some guidelines:

- What kind of story do they want to make: romance, mystery, comedy . . . ?
- The story could either be completely original, or a

new version of a well-known story. For example, a movie (*Titanic* was the subject for one group) or a children's story with a new twist (*Little Red Riding Hood* became *Black Riding Hood* for one group!)

• The story should be interesting for them.

Students have more control over what happens, although they are required to write detailed weekly planning and reflection sheets, describing what they have done, their decisions and their plans for the following week. (An example, from the second week of the final project, can be seen in the Appendix.) These sheets effectively become their schedule for the project, as well as a tool for reflection.

The challenges for the students are obviously greater with this project. The script is the immediate challenge, as there is no real framework for them to start from as there was with *Erm . . .* and *A Romantic Dinner.* The acting is a bigger commitment, too. The play is longer than the previous projects and, apart from involving more lines to memorize, this must inevitably lead to more complex and developed characters, although the performance is only around fifteen minutes. One of the challenges for the student, when acting, is to try to present a character which goes beyond the surface of short dialogue. The challenge for the teacher is to resist the urge to step in and direct: it is important to stay within the demands of the drama/ autonomy framework presented thus far. That means questioning the students and encouraging them to relate to their character on a personal level, to make it their own:

> The secret to success for the student is by remembering that [s]he is the center of the character and that this can be done through the use of "if": "If I were this character, how would I behave, or what would I say."　　　　　　　　　　Via and Smith (1983: xvi)

The week before their performance, each group can video their drama, so that they are able to evaluate their performance and make any improvements. They also have the opportunity to show their piece to a partner group, seeking comments and advice, as they did before *A Romantic Dinner.* The final presentations are again filmed and other groups complete the same kind of evaluation sheet (in either English or Japanese), which is later given

to the students concerned: as before, the key is for students to be detailed and constructive, rather than terse and judgmental. The following week, each group then views their own performance and completes a more detailed self-evaluation sheet with the following items:

ITEMS IN FINAL PROJECT REVIEW AND EVALUATION

Think carefully about your experience of writing, practising and performing the play.
Try to write as honestly and in as much detail as you can.

• Did you enjoy it?
    How did you feel when you were practising and during the performance?
• Script — Making the story
    How easy / difficult did you find it to write the script? What things were difficult? (Deciding the outline . . . Writing the characters' words . . . Trying to imagine what different characters would say . . . ?)
• Practising
    How much time did you spend practising outside of class?
    How much of your practice time was:
        — sitting/reading the lines or sitting/speaking the lines?
        — moving and speaking the lines?
        — acting practice?
• Your Performance
    Look at the comments you got from other groups. What comments do you think were important? (Good points? Points to improve?)
• Self-evaluation
    Thinking about your own performance, how would you evaluate yourselves?
    (Any comments are OK, but include good points and points to improve.)
• Finally . . .
    Make a list of points you would want to pay attention to, if you performed a play / drama in English in the future.

This evaluation session is the final week of the course. After the course, students make separate appointments to meet with the teacher in their group, to discuss their self-evaluations and the course as a whole.

4. Conclusion: Reflecting, Evaluating, Planning

The role of the teacher in an autonomous approach to drama has been a recurring theme throughout this paper: specifically the notion that the teacher's role is not to direct, but rather to allow and encourage students to take greater control. I have clearly suggested that this is not a question of abdicating control, but one of challenging students to take responsibility, where they are required to make explicit choices and decisions.

While it is a challenge for students to be so explicit about the characters and motivation in a drama, for exam-

ple, or about the process they are engaged in, such detailed reflection actually facilitates later review. It provides specific criteria for students to evaluate themselves by, particularly if it is written down. That is why the kind of questions that students are asked in the self-evaluation sheets echo the kind of decisions they have made in the planning and preparation for each project.

Evaluation (self-, peer- or teacher-evaluation), therefore, is not a judgmental process, aimed primarily at generating a grade or a number. It is a more formative process, intended to facilitate planning for the next step and to help students to move forward. It becomes then a natural part of the cycle of *Reflection — Evaluation — Planning* (REP).

The REP cycle is an important feature of autonomous learning and has lent itself naturally to this drama-focused course. Learner control, interdependence and critical reflection, all essential pillars of autonomous learning, have also been key elements in the course: they can be effective in a drama approach to language learning. Such an approach will work, as long as the teacher a) is prepared and able to step back from the unnecessary intervention of telling students how to act, what emotions to show, what to do; but also b) requires that students make these choices and decisions for themselves.

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APPENDIX: Sample Planning and Reflection Sheet for Final Project

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WEEK 2

Writing the Script . . .
June 9th
Group: ————————————————
Title of Play: ————————————————

Try to write in as much detail as you can.

1. How much of the script have you done? Explain how you got the story and did the work.
   Did you divide the scenes between the group members? Who did which scene?
   Did you make a memo in Japanese and then write directly in English? . . .

2. How do you feel about the script writing (so far)?
   How easy/difficult has it been to make the story and write the script?
   Explain exactly what things have been difficult.

3. What does your group need to do **as homework** before next week?
   Remember — you should be able to show me the script for a final check during next week's class; and, perhaps, begin practicing . . .)

4. What will the group do in next week's lesson?

5. Job check: who's doing what before next week?
   <u>Name</u>   <u>Job</u>: