

A Narrative Case Study of a Drama Teacher's Reflection-in-Action: The Impact of Group Factors on Pedagogical Decisions

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Abstract

This study was conducted in the context of the Tales by Teens project, which uses process drama as a part of its procedure. The study examines one teacher's reflection-in-action during two process dramas, focusing on the complex interplay between pedagogical thinking and student influences. Using a case study research design, it investigates how teacher beliefs interact with contextual and social factors during the dramas. Student influences on the unfolding of drama were identified as students' lived experiences and interests, their participation and engagement level, group composition, and external factors. The teacher's pedagogical thinking is characterized by observation, flexibility, modelling, and challenge. Not only does reflection-in-action facilitate discovery, but it also serves as a means of teacher learning. In actual classroom settings, the pedagogical interaction between the instructor and the students is highly nuanced. It is especially harder for those who are

inexperienced with using drama because of its potential for a wide variety of creative processes. In this sense, we hope that this paper will serve as a guide for other educators as well as ourselves when it comes to learning about the Tales by Teens procedure facilitation.

Introduction

Process drama is a unique way to learn a language because of how it is made. By their very nature, process drama lessons give students the chance to use the language in real-life tasks creatively and collaboratively. It presents affordances for naturally using the language. The formation of process drama is contingent upon the collaborative contributions of the student group. The successful execution of extending the drama in the classroom necessitates the teacher's ability to demonstrate flexibility. This quality is often described by Neelands (2009) as teacher "artistry" (p. 183).

According to *Bowell and Heap (2005)* drama involves a "spiral of creative exchange" between teacher and student (p. 66). In process drama, teachers must be able to take on the roles of playwright, actor, and director throughout the lesson. Teachers need to be able to fluidly transition between these roles. *Bowell and Heap* emphasize the meticulous planning teachers undertake, including designing scripts, visualizing the desired results, and devising activities that are interesting to the students. During the planning of the lesson, the teachers meticulously design the script, visualize the desired results, and devise activities that are interesting to the students. During the teaching of the lesson, the teacher should guide students in their creative inquiry while offering clear direction and assistance. In the same vein, the students react by demonstrating a fourfold response in their positions as playwrights, directors, actors, and learners (*Bowell & Heap, 2005*). This response sets in motion a cycle of inter-change and dialectic in each of these roles, which moves the drama forward both in space and time. The students, assuming the responsibilities of a playwright, start by drafting the script, giving careful thought to the storyline, the dialogue, and the progression of the characters. When they take on the role of director, they are responsible for making decisions concerning the staging, blocking, and overall vision of the performance. Last but not least, as actors, they bring their characters to life on stage by empathizing with those characters' feelings and reciting their lines with conviction. The dynamic interplay that occurs across roles results in a learning experience that is both dynamic and interesting for everyone participating (*Bowell & Heap, 2005*).

To be able to manage this "spiral of creative exchange" between the teacher and student roles in process drama (*Bowell & Heap, 2005, p. 66*), it is imperative for the teacher to reflect in action. "Often in the process of reflection in action, we invent new forms of drama or

experiment with new ways of constructing meaning through unique uses of dramatic form” (O’Mara, 2006, p. 42). It is imperative for the teacher to have an open mind-set towards the students’ contributions and effectively utilize them as a foundation for further development. As the teacher leads the students through the numerous facets of the dramatic form, they will need to make decisions in order to successfully accomplish their task. The teacher needs to be versatile and fluid, allowing the students to contribute their ideas to the development of the process drama. A collaborative and empowered learning environment that encourages imaginative thinking and the development of critical thinking abilities can be established by the teacher simply by recognizing and valuing the contributions made by the students. The teachers can include distinctive uses of dramatic form to develop new forms of drama or investigate using new ways of making meaning (O’Mara, 2006) as a result of reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983), which enables the teachers to explore new ways of generating meaning.

In this study, we document one teacher’s reflection-in-action during two process dramas beginning with the same pre-text. Despite being based on the same pre-text, the two dramas took different shapes. By examining these cases, we aim to highlight the complex interplay between pedagogical thinking and student influences on the unfolding of the drama. In addition, we aim to illustrate the application of the Tales by Teens procedure. Since this procedure is developed newly, this study will also provide a glance into how the Tales by Teens procedure works.

Theoretical Framework

Process drama is defined as the work where “the participants, together with the teacher (facilitator) constitute the theatrical ensemble and engage in drama to make meaning for themselves... ‘writing’ their own play as the narrative and tensions of their drama unfold in time and space” (Bowell & Heap, 2005, p. 9). Dunn (2016) summarizes the key characteristics of process drama as follows:

- Collaboration between all participants including the teacher/facilitator.
- Absence of an external audience – meaning is made for and by the participants
- Direct involvement in the action by the teacher or facilitator
- The centrality of tension and the importance of symbolic transformation
- Its spontaneous and improvised nature
- The fact that participants have agency in the work with their improvised offers informing the direction of the dramatic action
- And perhaps most significantly, that it is an important member of the wider genre of theatre. (p. 128)

Upon examining the aforementioned attributes, it can be posited that the process drama classroom is distinguished by the equitable distribution of power between students and the instructor, as well as its inherent unpredictability. This improvised nature of drama demands reflection in action (Taylor, 1995). The ability to adapt and modify instructional plans is a necessary skill for educators to accommodate various circumstances and student needs. According to Neelands (2006), this skill is “reflexivity in practice” (p. 19).

Taylor (1995) puts forward two principles of drama structuring based on reflection in action. First, the teachers need to reflect on the logical sequences of activities. All activities have clear educational goals, however, they cannot be used in random order. Teachers need to find a sequence which will best work according to the students’ participation during the course of the work. Second, the teachers must try to find a balance between their own needs and those of their students. Teachers’ and the students’ needs may be fundamentally different. Teachers must “find ways of entrapping students in the drama without disenfranchising them” (Taylor, 1995, p. 41).

O’Mara (2015) developed a model to show how reflection in action is related to other aspects of process drama. According to this model, the teacher constantly reflects on the issues of aesthetics of the drama form, students and the class dynamics, and planning. This ongoing reflection naturally informs and shapes the planning decisions described by Dunn and Stinson (2011), which occur at two distinct levels.

Dunn and Stinson (2011) assert that instructors engage in planning choices at two distinct levels. The first level, known as macro-level planning, involves decisions made before the start of lessons. This includes the selection of a pretext and the development of a learning sequence. The second level, referred to as micro-level planning, encompasses decisions made during the actual implementation of instruction. In this context, our focus will be on micro-level planning, namely the artistry required to make good judgments based on student answers in real time.

Piazzoli (2014) analyses her own reflection in action in the intra-episode and inter-episode at both the macro and micro-level planning choices. She classifies the intra-episode reflections as “the flexible decision-making that occurs while improvising within one episode” (p. 13) and the inter-episode reflections as “thinking on her feet while creating new episodes for the drama” (p. 14). She concludes that reflection in action is a form of authenticity in progress and asserts that teacher artistry develops through a growing ability to reflect in action.

In this study, we understand pedagogical thinking as reflection-in-action. “Pedagogical thinking is a teacher’s professional thinking, which is related to the decision-making process in educational contexts, particularly in supporting students’ learning. What describes teacher

pedagogical thinking is the ability to justify the decisions based on the prevailing evidence” (Meena, 2023, p. 12). According to Schön (1983), the idea of reflection-in-action encompasses problem setting and problem resolution: practical difficulties don't appear as givens. They must be made from complex, troublesome, and ambiguous elements or circumstances. When we establish the issue, we choose the ‘things’ of the circumstance, define the scope of our attention to it, and give it a coherence that lets us declare what's wrong and what needs to change. Thus, we use critical episodes as the unit of analysis while interpreting the teacher’s reflection-in-action. Critical episodes are “decisions or actions by the teacher that are fundamental in establishing or progressing learning” (Braund et al., 2013, p. 6).

The Context of the Study

The researchers worked on a project called "Tales by Teens" to develop a language-learning classroom procedure. The ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Turkish Ministry of Education (No: 34711998) and the Ethical Review Board of the University (No: 210002-5). Written informed consent was received from the students’ parents and students themselves before data collection.

Tales by Teens is built on task-based language teaching, process drama, and collaborative writing. A storyline is developed via process drama and jointly put down in a collaborative writing task. All four skills are developed in an integrated way throughout the process drama via interconnected sub-tasks that culminate in the grand task of creating a written story.

The project developed the five implementation steps of the Tales by Teens procedure as follows: (a) Students warm up, learn the context, and discover a pre-text containing a question or issue in the *preparation* stage. Game-based activities, group building, and reflection can take place if needed; (b) The *creation* step investigates the story's characters, key events, and points utilizing process drama conventions. Starting from the pre-text introduced in the preparation phase, the class enact episodes of the story and reflect on them. The story is built in this way; (c) *Dramatization* phase serves the production phase by showing key scenes for students to see and take notes; (d) Creative writing and corrective criticism are part of the *production* stage, which gives learners time to prepare and think; (e) In *negotiation*, the group decides on the story's ultimate shape after receiving comments, editing, and ideas.

Certain principles must be considered while using Tales by Teens in the classroom. The first principle is participation, which requires the teacher to include all students in instructional activities. The second principle emphasizes fluency over accuracy, allowing students to successfully communicate their thoughts and ideas through a variety of methods. Third, the teacher must prioritize the task by urging the group to consider writing a collective story. The

teacher should also provide students with frequent comments and let them revise. Students may improve their writing and communication by following these guidelines.

In this paper, we will specifically report on two implementations of the Tales by Teens procedure. The pre-text which we call “Cup Song Drama” was first piloted in (1st Anonymized) School (MSH hereafter). The same pre-text was then used in the main experiment in (2nd Anonymized) School (MAH, hereafter). MSH Cup Song Drama was implemented towards the end of the piloting process. The MSH group consisted of twenty volunteers from 9th, 10th, and 11th grades. It was a mixed-ability group that had come together because they shared a passion for literature and English language learning. After school, the lessons were held in an open space in the school library. The project was made available to students as an extracurricular activity. By the time the Cup Song Drama was presented to the students, they had formed a relatively cohesive group structure and were accustomed to working in the Tales by Teens procedure. In the case of the MAH Cup Song Drama, the group was a ninth-grade class. In terms of proficiency level and age, this group was more homogeneous than the MSH group, and the students attended all of the school lessons as a class. They were introduced to the Tales by Teens project as part of their English classes. It was done during school hours in their regular classroom. Although the group had already established group dynamics, they were unfamiliar with the Tales by Teens procedure. Using the Tales by Teens procedure with the same pre-text with these different groups provided us with a unique opportunity to observe the group and contextual variables in the process drama's moment-by-moment management.

The Cup Song Drama at MSH was completed over the course of two sessions, each lasting three hours, over two consecutive weeks. At MAH, it was conducted over a period of two consecutive weeks, with each session lasting for two hours. Both Cup Song Dramas were facilitated by P (pseudonym), a language teacher, teacher educator, and professional drama specialist. Another researcher was present in all of the sessions, making observations, taking field notes, and documenting the teachings.

The song video clip "When I'm Gone" by Anna Kendrick was picked as an appropriate pre-text for this particular drama. Since O'Neill (1995) originally coined the phrase to characterize the means through which a dramatic background is utilized to frame learning, the term "pre-text" has been increasingly employed in current drama pedagogy (Ackroyd, 2004; Howell & Heap, 2005; O'Neill, 1995; O'Toole & Dunn, 2002; Taylor, 1995). Given its importance in defining and framing the activity, choosing an appropriate pre-text is crucial if learners and teachers are to have a rich experience. First, music serves as a universal medium of communication, and the use of a pop song aligns with the preferences of many teenagers. Additionally, the song's themes reflect a passage in life, which is likely to resonate with teenage experiences and emotions. The narrative implied by the song raises intriguing

questions, such as why the character left and where she went, providing a compelling basis for creative storytelling. In the video clip, a young waitress is shown performing the traditional children's game - cup song - while singing the song. Anna Kendrick is in the kitchen, using a cup to make dough. She looks at the wall, where photos of various locales that appear to have been pulled from magazines are hung. She then goes inside the restaurant to serve the guests while singing her song and playing the cup song game. Customers participate in the cup singing game to accompany her music. She leaves the restaurant without saying anything at the end of the song.

In the Cup Song Drama, the first step is creating a friend group for Anna Kendrick. To do this, we invited the students to learn the cup song routines in groups and informed them that they would compete in a large competition with a cup song performance. After winning the big prize, their groupmate Anna vanishes without saying anything. Years later, they reunite with Anna, and the reason for her departure is revealed. These aspects imply new beginnings in life and future plans, which were supposed to be engaging and relevant issues for the students' age groups. Linguistically, the students were required to converse and discuss future plans, as well as explanations of the whys and the wherefores. As a result, the drama's language concentration was on discussing future goals and discussing previous events.

Method

This study adopted a case study research design that favors intensity and depth, exploring the interaction between matter and context for defining a unit of analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), and was informed by a qualitative research framework that represents the perspectives of the people under real-world contextual conditions to explain human social behaviour (Yin, 2011). Since “case study offers strong heuristic properties as well as analytic possibilities for illustrating a phenomenon in very vivid, detailed, and highly contextualized ways from different perspectives” (Duff, 2020, p. 145), the present study investigated the ways in which P’s pedagogical beliefs interacted with environmental and social factors as the process dramas played out in the two versions of the Cup Song Drama. The research question was formulated as “How are a teacher’s pedagogical decisions influenced by the characteristics and dynamics of the student group during process dramas?” The sole participant of the study is P, who facilitated the dramas. The videos and the students in the interviews were used as stimulus for her reflection-in-action and no direct data from them were used for analysis.

Since reflection in action is fleeting, it is challenging to record. O'Mara (2006) suggests that one way to capture this is through the use of retrospective thought experiments known as stimulated recall. To capture P’s pedagogical thinking while implementing the two Cup Song Dramas, we used a stimulated recall interview as the data collection method. P sat with the interviewer and watched the video recordings on a laptop in a quiet, distraction-free setting.

She was instructed to pause the video whenever she wanted to comment on a moment she deemed critical or noteworthy. The interviews were audio-recorded to capture P's reflections. Reflection-in-action was central to this data, as it provided a lens for understanding how P's ongoing reflections during teaching influenced her decisions. The critical episodes were identified based on moments flagged by P during the interviews. She was encouraged to comment freely on any aspect of the lessons she found significant. If necessary, prompts were provided, such as 'What were you thinking at this moment?' or 'Why did you decide to take this approach?'

The resulting recordings were then analysed in terms of content, tabulating the critical episodes identified by P according to the Tales by Teens steps. Finally, we turned these episodes into a personal narrative. It has been suggested by Vazir (2006) that personal narratives might be useful instruments for conducting investigations as well as reflection. Researchers in the past, such as Connelly and Clandinin (1988) and Orland (2000), have used this strategy to investigate educators. A visual summary of the data collection and analysis procedure resulting in the narrative is presented in the Figure 1 below.

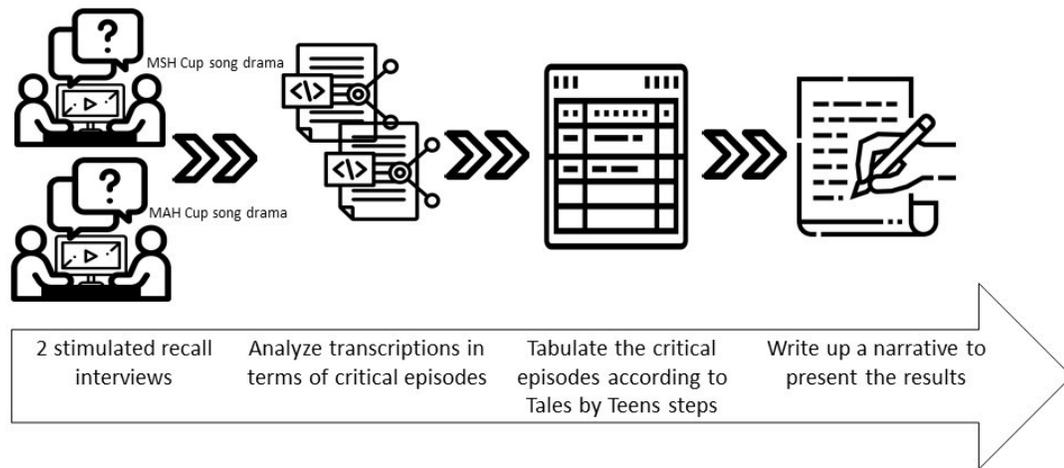


Figure 1. The Data Collection and Analysis Procedure.

The whole analysis cannot be given here due to space constraints. However, one critical episode and how it was used for analysis is described below to illustrate the analysis process (Table 1). The two main sections of the table contain extracts from the creation phase of the Cup Song Dramas in MSH and MAH respectively. The first column of these rows describes what is happening in the video. In the original data, the videos are not transcribed; the descriptions below are produced for this paper. The square bracketed Roman numbers indicate where the video was stopped by P or the interviewer to comment/ask questions about it as listed with corresponding numbers in the second column. The underlined parts of the

comments are the in vivo codes that are cumulated under the themes. In Table 2, all of the codes resulting from the analysis of the complete data based on P's comments are presented (not limited to the part of the analysis presented in Table 1). After identifying and analysing the critical episodes in the manner shown in Table 1, we reviewed all the pedagogical decisions and validated them by agreeing on them to ensure intercoder reliability.

Table 1

A sample from the analysis of the transcriptions

MSH Cup Song Drama	
<u>What is Happening in the Video</u>	<u>P's Comments on Her Reflection in Action</u>
<p>Students watch the video. Stopping the video, P turns to the students and says "Just like that... she left without saying anything to anybody." There is silence for a while. P asks: "How do you feel? What are you thinking?" One female student takes the floor, saying that she is worried about Anna. Her first reaction would be worrying if she was in trouble. After a few more similar comments by other students, one of the more proficient students asks about the lyrics of the song. She says there might be a message in the lyrics. P finds the lyrics on the internet and reads them aloud. "I have the ticket for the long way round... When I'm gone, you're gonna miss me." From these lyrics, a student suggests that "Maybe she asked us before going, but we did not want to go for some reason." [i]</p> <p>After this comment, P asks "What could have prevented us from going with her?" The students gave anecdotes from their own lives. For example, the students suggested that in some cases, we let our friends go because of our own insecurities. P says, "Let's see what happened, then. Let's get into groups and make a scene about the last time you spoke with Anna." [ii]</p>	<p>[i] I had not based my plan on the lyrics; I was planning to just use the fact that Anna left without saying anything, and flash-forward to the time when the group unites again. <u>When the student suggested looking into the lyrics, I accepted it</u> (Flexibility 2). <u>I thought something interesting might result from this</u> (Modelling 2). But I knew from that point on that the story would take a different path than I had expected.</p> <p>[ii] The students wanted the story like that, so I obliged. Based on their input, I thought on my feet about how to go on. Since the students were saying that Jonathan did not want to go despite being invited, <u>it was a good opportunity for advancing the drama by using the flashback technique</u> (Flexibility 3). By this way, more details about the story would be revealed.</p>

Table 1 (continued)

<u>What is Happening in the Video</u>	<u>P's Comments on Her Reflection in Action</u>
<p>Three groups are formed. The first group showed the two characters drinking at a party. Anna and Sebastian are in love. Jonathan does not want to go with them. The second group showed Anna trying to convince Jonathan to go to university with them but he refuses strictly. He says "There will be some bad things there, I don't want you to go." The third group showed all three characters sitting at a park. Anna and Sebastian are excited to move to another city, but Jonathan does not want to go. [iii]</p>	<p>[iii] As you can see, the more proficient students are taking the more active roles. They selected the most proficient ones for improvisation. This has become a code of conduct in this group; they first discuss it in Turkish, they decide what they want to show first, then the more proficient ones play the scene in English. I think, the less proficient ones benefit from this, too. Because they see the scene in fully English and completely understand it because they already discussed it in Turkish before. The students are providing a model for each other. Also, the more proficient students do not want to be on the stage all the time, so they sometimes encourage the less proficient ones to go on stage. You can see in the third group, Sebastian's role is played by a 9th grader but the others prepared him beforehand by teaching him what to say when it is his turn. <u>I like this atmosphere of acceptance and collaboration, without being blamed, everybody contributes only as much as their ability allows, but the result belongs to all of the group</u> (Challenge 3).</p>
<p>Having watched these three scenes, the students discuss the three alternatives. They decide that they do not want it to be a story about a love triangle. They agree to combine the second and third alternatives; Anna, Sebastian and Jonathan are accepted to the same university. Jonathan has got supernatural powers but he cannot reveal this secret to the others. Jonathan knows that something bad will happen if they move to the town of the university. Since he could not explain it to them, Anna and Sebastian move there anyway, leaving Jonathan behind. They do not agree to stay with Jonathan unless he gives them a good reason. [iv]</p>	<p>[iv] This group was extra sensitive about coherence of the resulting story. They took pride in the stories they created. <u>This part was carried out largely in Turkish because I wanted everybody to be able to say their thoughts about the plot</u> (Flexibility 1). <u>But I made sure to summarize the final decision on the board in English</u> (Observation 2). We almost always used English on the stage and on the board except for a few instances.</p>
MAH Cup Song Drama	
<p>P explains that one of the group members left after the competition. "In the video, we will see her leaving." She comments. Students watch the video. P says "Just like that... she left without saying anything to anybody. How do you feel? What are you thinking?" Since nobody volunteers to speak, P continues "You have been in a cup song competition, you have been good friends. You depend on her, but she ghosted you like this. Do you know what ghosting is? It is not a nice thing to do, is it? She suddenly stopped responding to your calls, and you don't know where she is. How does this make you feel?" [i]</p>	<p>[i] <u>Students had difficulty in understanding my intention to show the video</u> (Observation 1). I had been kind of expecting that because this is the very first drama session we were doing. They had not gotten used to speaking in role yet. So I was making a lot of explanations, repeating the instructions, and such. <u>I was talking eagerly about the story so far</u> (Modelling 2). In this way, I was hoping to motivate the students to continue the story.</p>

Table 1 (continued)

<u>What is Happening in the Video</u>	<u>P's Comments on Her Reflection in Action</u>
<p>A few students say they would be mad at Anna for ghosting them. Then, one student asks, "Did she take the prize money with her?" "I don't know," says P, "I thought you bought a house with the money, so no, she did not take the money with her" [ii]</p>	<p>[ii] <u>It is a good sign that students begin asking questions about the plot. But they had not developed a sense of coherence yet.</u> (Observation 1). <u>So, I reminded them that money was spent on the house, so Anna could not have taken the money with her</u> (Modelling 3). This detail had been decided before, so students saw that we should develop the story from there. <u>My next move was to flash forward to two years later. In this way, why Anna left would be revealed.</u></p>
<p>P goes on: "You did not see her for another two years. Then, you run into her on the street. What would you say to her? Please write it on the back of your cups." [iii]</p>	<p>[iii] <u>I could see that some students were able to understand the instructions but some others needed more explanation in Turkish</u> (Observation 1). Not all students' level of proficiency was quite enough to understand everything in English. <u>I was glad that students were asking for help</u> (Challenge 2). Some students asked for vocabulary; some the instructions; and some others asked for a translation.</p>
<p>Students get to work, there is some noise; students turn to each other and exchange ideas. Some students ask for more explanation to which P responds privately by going near them. The cups are gathered once everyone has finished writing on them. P arranges the similar ones together first. After that, she gives instructions for the collective role. [iv]</p>	<p>[iv] I wanted to introduce group improvisation at a later stage of the lesson. I figured they were not ready yet. <u>In my opinion, a collective role is easier than improvisation since the students do not have to maintain the conversation on their own; they can contribute when they are ready</u> (Challenge 3). The collective role convention is flexible like that.</p>
<p>The students take the role of Anna collectively. That is, P takes the role of the group member while any student can volunteer to speak for the Anna role. In this case, each line for Anna was spoken by a different student. "Long time no see! How are you?" says P, reading from the bottom of one of the cups. One student raises his hand and responds "I am fine, and you?"</p>	<p>[v] Not all students took a turn; to avoid redundancy, I stopped the dialogue at a convenient point. <u>I did not force all of the students to take part in the collective role, because I knew that some of the students were hardly following the conversation due to their limited language ability</u> (Challenge 3). I only gave turns to the ones who raised their hands. <u>By summarizing the details on the board after the activity, I hoped that the students would be able to take notes</u> (Observation 2). In addition, they would be able to use the phrases and vocabulary in the production phase.</p>
<p>P: I am fine. (Reading) Where did you go?</p>	
<p>Anna: I went to work elsewhere.</p>	
<p>P: But why did you go?</p>	
<p>Anna: I wanted to be rich.</p>	
<p>P: Why did you go without saying anything?</p>	
<p>Anna: The cyber terrorist told me to vanish. I was in danger.</p>	

Table 1 (continued)

P: I am angry with you.

Anna: Yes, whatever.

P: Do you miss us?

Anna: Yeah, sure. (sarcasm)

P stops the collective role at this point. She summarizes what was revealed about Anna on the board. [v]

Note. The Roman numerals in square brackets are the points where the video was stopped by P or the interviewer to make/elicite comments. The underlined parts are in vivo codes cumulated under the themes stated in brackets at the end of the sentences. The key is provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Keys to themes and sub-themes

Observation

1. Looking for clues of (lack of) engagement
2. Looking for teachable moments

Flexibility

1. Making sure that students' ideas and suggestions are heard
2. Incorporating students' ideas into the drama
3. Working in an episodic manner

Modelling

1. Joining in the drama using T-I-R
2. Being enthusiastic and energetic
3. Explaining your thinking
4. Becoming a group member in tasks where possible

Challenge

1. Making sure that the students are challenged and supported in a balanced way
 2. Letting the students collaborate on problems
 3. Allowing students to participate in different ways according to their ability
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Note. According to students' lived experiences and interests, students' participation and engagement level, group composition, and external factors.

Table 1 details the analysis process. It includes a selected sample of critical episodes to illustrate the process for readers. The complete list of themes and subthemes is provided in Table 2. In the findings section below, a narrative of the lessons will be presented based on the identified themes and subthemes.

Findings

In this section, we present the personal narrative provided by P for the two Cup Song Drama versions. This personal narrative sheds light on her unique experiences and perspectives with the two cup song drama versions. Her narrative offers valuable insights into the creative process and the impact of students' contributions on her decision-making. While constructing this personal narrative, the focus was on her pedagogical decisions during the implementation of the Tales by Teens procedure. The phrases in italics represent the themes derived from the analysis of the stimulated recall interviews. For a complete list of the themes and subthemes that emerged from this analysis, refer to Table 2.

The Preparation Phase

I chose to start the drama by talking about childhood anecdotes about playing games and childhood friends in MSH. From there, I tied it to the topic of the cup song game, which is a popular camping game, but not in Turkey. In this way, I tried to create parallels to the students' personal history of friendship and games with the upcoming drama. In the MAH group, I made a series of moves with the cup in synch with my name. The students tried to repeat the exact same moves while saying my name aloud. Then I asked each student to do the same with their own names. Students tried to come up with original moves such as throwing the cup in the air or experimenting with different ways of producing sounds using the cups. I tried to keep a light, fun atmosphere. I tried to plan these different ways of introducing the cup song game taking into consideration the group's previous experience with drama. MSH group had already been used to the Tales by Teens procedure, so my priority was personalizing the topic by introducing childhood memories. On the other hand, this would be the first time that the MAH group would see Tales by Teens procedure, so my priority was establishing a working ethic with the students.

During this activity, the MAH students practiced listening to each other attentively and respectfully while trying to repeat the moves. *In both groups, I was observing the students attentively.* In MSH, I was looking for signs of involvement; in MAH evidence of understanding the work ethic of drama. Next, I taught the students the cup song moves. In both groups, this was a very challenging task since it activated both the right and left brain at the same time. *While I was deciding whether to continue the activity or to suspend/change it to help the students, I was always evaluating the level of challenge.* Setting an appropriate level of challenge for the students helped them to cooperate and learn to depend on each other.

Some students were able to learn the moves sooner than the others in both groups. The less successful ones had to ask for help from their peers. *I decided to move on to the next phase when I could observe that most of the initial frustration was overcome* and the rhythm of the cup song moves was somewhat recognizable in the noisy clatter of the cups across the room.

The Creation and Dramatization Phase

I used the teacher-in-role convention as an entrance point to the drama world. In both groups, I took the role of the presenter of a cup song competition in which groups of students had to compete. As the host of the show, I invited each group of students to the stage to present their show. I played the role enthusiastically and energetically. *I set a model by playing big and noisy to build belief in the dramatic situation.* I think if I believe and act like that, the students will join me and imitate my mood. After each presentation, I interviewed the groups asking about how they decided to enter the competition, for how long they had been friends, and what they wanted to do with the big prize money if they won the competition. *Asking lots of questions invites students' ideas.* In both groups, there were different ideas presented by the groups. However, the ideas that made it to the final version of the stories were like this: In MSH, the group would go to the same college using the money. In MAH, the group would buy a house with the prize money. To me, these decisions were not random. MSH has a highly competitive academic environment among its pupils. It is known as the school of high achievers, and going to a good college is a priority for most of the students. In MAH, the group consists of 9th graders who are studying their first year at this school. Most of the students must have recently encountered difficulties with accommodation. In addition, the time of the drama coincides with the time when house rents had skyrocketed in Muğla. So, houses and house rents were one of the major topics in the students' daily lives then.

Another clear example of the reflection of the students' lives and interests in the development of the drama can be given as the character choice for the stories. At the time of the implementation in MSH, the new Spiderman movie was in the theatres and it was a popular topic of conversation among the students. They did not name the character Peter, but they gave the character Jonathan a similar supernatural power as Spiderman; being able to sense danger in the future. At times, they made explicit links by joking about how great responsibility comes with great power during the discussions. In the MAH group, the characters of the story were named after classmates; Müş, Melih, and Başkan are the nicknames of some students from the class. Drama naturally feeds from the lives and interests of the students. *I kept an open mind with students' suggestions for plot and character development.* I always assumed an inviting attitude with students' suggestions.

To advance the plot, I used Anna Kendrick's video clip. In both groups, I told them Anna was one of the members of the group and she left as shown in the video after winning the prize from the competition. In both groups, we dramatized parts of the story. An important

characteristic of process drama is that it allows unfolding the story in an episodic way; not necessarily in a chronological way. In MSH, I decided to use the flashback technique while in MAH, I flash-forwarded to two years later using the collective role technique. At this point, the stories had taken shape to a great extent. We did one further episode in each group to add some details and bring closure to the stories. In the MSH group, I used the writing-in-role convention. The students wrote the diary of Jonathan and Anna on the day that they coincidentally met. In the MAH group, I used the flashback technique to see how and why Anna decided to leave. These episodes were completely dependent upon the point where the story had come to, and shaped according to the events that unfolded up to that point. In other words, they could not have been planned beforehand. *I had to think on my feet about which convention to use and which episode to work on.*

These decisions were to set a challenge in line with the students' level of participation and reactions. I considered group composition (i.e., language level, homogeneity, number of members, previous experience with drama) and external factors (i.e., time allowed, the physical space considerations) while choosing the specific drama conventions I used. *While carrying out the tasks, I allowed the students to contribute as much as their proficiency and skills allowed.* This flexibility helped the students cooperate and collaborate better and feel less intimidated by the procedure.

Production Phase

I followed different paths while producing the story with the two groups. These decisions largely depended on taking into consideration the group composition and external factors. For example, the MSH group was heterogeneous in terms of proficiency and age and it was a smaller group than the MAH group. Therefore, in the MSH group, the students shared the parts of the story on the board. Then one volunteer combined the story into one coherent narrative. We worked on the final product as a whole group. Since the group is not crowded, this was easy to carry out on the board. My role was more of a mediator while the students were working on the text. In the MAH group, there are more students. It was not easy to work on the same narrative together. Besides, the students did not have enough language proficiency, therefore, the students wrote the story individually first, then I studied the stories and combined them myself. After that, we read the story together with the students. *I worked as a group member during the collaborative writing phase. I specifically paid attention to not dominating the group.* For example, in the MAH group, I took a more central role in terms of text development. To balance that, I wanted the students to produce illustrations to accompany their story. We decided on five tableaux from the most important scenes. We photographed these tableaux. A volunteer student made the illustrations of the story based on the photographs of the tableaux. *In both groups, the production phase involved lots of teachable*

moments. I made sure to observe these opportunities and give corrective feedback or introduce new phrases as the need emerged.

Negotiation Phase

By its very nature, process drama forces the facilitator to be democratic. At different points throughout the dramas, I tried to create a democratic environment. *As far as I could, I let the students voice their opinions about the developing story*. I made sure that I invited students for reflection whenever possible. At several points of the sessions, the students expressed their satisfaction, and at times, dissatisfaction with the events that we created and dramatized. I made sure to hear all students' opinions by asking them questions. In this way all of the group felt the ownership of the resulting story.

Discussion

The development of the story in the Tales by Teens process is highly dependent upon the students' reactions. This makes the job of facilitating it a messy process. Hence, the pedagogical decisions taken by the teacher during the lesson are not readily explicable or instantly discernible. In this study, P's narrative unravels some of the group factors that influenced her moment-to-moment decisions.

First of all, the characters and plot of the story take shape according to the group's lived experiences and interests. It is essential to keep an open mind to students' suggestions and not plan the drama in a rigid way. Instead of forcing a rigid plan and teaching agenda on the students, the teacher learns to go with the flow and take the teachable moments effectively while giving direction to the drama using its episodic nature. The artistic practice of improvisation is founded around the fundamental principle of acceptance rather than blocking other performers (Johnstone, 1999). It involves actively engaging in attentive listening and responsive actions, as opposed to abruptly interrupting or relying on preconceived notions. This is also true for the drama teacher; it is critical for the teacher to learn to be flexible, accommodating, and building on the contributions of students. According to O'Neill (2006), a process drama teacher is a teacher-artist who works with students in a process of dramatic discovery. She claims that in process drama, the instructor is more likely to work effectively from within the creative process, as a co-artist alongside the students, rather than from outside.

The success of drama is measured by students' active participation in the drama action (Toivanen et al., 2012). The teacher invites the students for reflection often to empower them. Most importantly, the teacher sets an appropriate level of challenge by observing how the students cope with the tasks. Looking at the signs and ways of involvement, the teacher makes further pedagogical decisions. Therefore, the teacher observes the students closely and sets the

challenge level accordingly. This also means allowing some space for the students to choose how exactly they want to/are able to participate in the process. Some students choose to be in more central roles than others. The linguistic ability of the students is sometimes an effective factor in determining their participation. The teacher makes sure that each student is able to participate in their own way by providing a range of opportunities for linguistic, non-linguistic, and embodied modes. Rothwell (2011) says that more intentional use of the kinaesthetic mode in the classroom of a second language can encourage, build up, and validate the verbal involvement of beginning language learners.

The participation opportunities are additionally determined by group composition and external factors. The teacher considers carefully the characteristics and the background of the group while shaping the drama experience. What is significant to the learner may not be immediately obvious to the teacher, therefore, a sensitivity toward the students' social and cultural-historical identities is necessary for learning to occur (Taylor, 1995). The physical arrangement of the classroom, the facilities, and the time available are also among the factors influencing teacher's pedagogical decisions.

Secondly, the teacher makes deliberate pedagogical choices to create a more balanced power dynamic with the class. By maintaining an upbeat attitude throughout, the teacher consciously tries to establish rapport with the students. The teacher goes beyond the traditional teacher roles by participating in the dramas and by taking responsibility and ownership of the produced story. This is considered important because the students must feel powerful and entitled to be able to give direction to the drama as expected. If they feel intimidated by peers or by the teacher, they cannot develop agency. According to Dunn and Stinson (2011) and Piazzoli (2014), students' emotional commitment varies, and the power dynamic shifts when they are able to exercise agency through negotiation, both in and out of role.

Although the two drama examples discussed above employed the same pretext, each group's final story was different. No matter how many times it is implemented, the same pretext would have led to just as many different stories each time because every group would be unique. However, in each application, like the ones seen here, the learning objectives would have been reached. In that respect, we can discuss that the Tales by Teens procedure gives a flexible, personalized way of experiencing language.

However different were the characters and plots in MSH and MAH groups' dramas, close examination of P's pedagogical decisions in the critical episodes revealed that she operated based on the same intentions and beliefs in both cases. Drama necessitates a certain set of teacher capacities, as noted by Toivanen et al. (2012). These include enthusiasm, confidence, planning and goal-setting, and teaching skills. These elements are a component of the real teaching-learning situation.

Conclusion

In this study, the personal narrative provided by P presents her unique experiences and perspectives with the two versions of Cup Song Drama. It also offers valuable insights into the creative process and the impact of students' contributions on her decision-making. In constructing this personal narrative, the focus was on her pedagogical decisions during the implementation of the Tales by Teens procedure, namely the preparation phase, the creation and dramatization phase, the production phase, and the negotiation phase. Each of these phases was presented in the study, and we attempted to shed light on the teacher's pedagogical thinking during the Tales by Teens procedure. So, we hoped to accomplish this by providing a closer look at this innovative classroom procedure in action.

Our analysis of the critical moments in the two process dramas revealed the important principles for pedagogical thinking; observation, flexibility, modelling, and challenge, which allowed the group factors such as students' lived experiences and interests, their participation and engagement level, group composition, and external factors that shape the unfolding of the dramas.

Besides being a method of discovery, reflection in action is also a method of learning for the teacher. We have learned more about the facilitation of the Tales by Teens procedure in this study. In real-life classrooms, the pedagogical relationship between the teacher and the students is quite complicated. The possible diversity of creative processes in drama makes it even more difficult for trainee and beginner teachers to succeed (Toivanen et al., 2012). In this regard, we think that this paper will shed light on both our and other teachers' learning about the interplay between group factors and drama facilitation.

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