

**EMBODYING ENGLISH LANGUAGE: JACQUES LECOQ AND THE  
NEUTRAL MASK**

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## ABSTRACT

My study explores the process of settlement for Newcomer-to-Canada youth (NTCY) who are engaged in English-language learning (ELL) of mainstream education. I propose the inclusion of a modified physical theatre technique to ELL curricula to demonstrate how a body-based supplemental to learning can assist in improving students' language acquisition and proficiency. This recognizes the embodied aspect of students' settlement and integration as a necessary first-step in meaning making processes of traditional language-learning practices.

Foundational to this thesis is an exploration of the Neutral Mask (NM), an actors training tool developed by French physical theatre pedagogue Jacques Lecoq. A student of Lecoq (1990-1992), I understand NM as a transformative learning experience; it shapes the autoethnographic narrative of this study. My research considers the relationship between the body and verbal speech in English-language learning, as mediated by the mask. An acting tool at the heart of Lecoq's School, the mask values the non-verbal communication of the body and its relationship to verbal speech. My study explains how the mask, by its design, can reach diverse learning needs to offer newcomer students a sense of agency in their language learning process. I further demonstrate *how* through discussion of an experimental applied practice field study.

One of the overarching questions of this research is whether the ELL experience enhances or hinders newcomer youth in their settlement integration. Through the critical lenses of phenomenology and embodiment, I suggest reshaping the language-learning classroom into a pedagogical space that better fosters newcomer youths' bodies-of-cultural origin as they begin to distance from their heritage language. Preparing to make Canada their home, newcomer youth can be provided with a learning space for the exploration of the body *before* the language – *for* the learning.

*Per Donato e Eugenia ...*

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This dissertation would not exist had it not been for *L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq*—a learning experience that completely transformed my life almost 25 years ago. Directly on the heels of graduating from *Ecole Lecoq*, I was invited to join the France-based Lecoquian repertoire company *Theatre de la Jacquerie*. I am eternally indebted to *La Jacquerie* and its founding Artistic Director, Alain Mollot (also senior acting teacher at the Lecoq School). Similar to Lecoq's training, *La Jacquerie* engages a research process through the exploration of movement, grounded in the humanness of lived experience. Six seasons as a core repertory member—the empirical ‘nuts and bolts’ of creating new work, i.e. the analysis of *le jeu* (the play), the design of story-telling, actor/audience aesthetic exchange, architecture of the playing space, and, pertinent to this study, the puissance of embodied performance as a teaching and learning practice in which to inform and educate—all contributed to creating this project.

My years with *La Jacquerie* provided opportunities to encounter problems—ones that exceeded our preparation as students of theatre. We often referred to these hard “art” lessons as “beautiful problems,” due to how they taught us to look to the body, and to the remarkable wonder of its organic function and organization for the answers. I have drawn upon all these experiences in my attempts to transpose physical theatre from the stage to the page. In my work as a physical theatre performer, artist-educator and teacher, I strive to uphold these fundamentals, cultivated from my years at the *Ecole Lecoq* and *La Jacquerie*.

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Figure 0:1 Jacques Lecoq. This image hangs in the foyer at ‘*Le Central*’ 57 rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis the Lecoq School. It is part of a commemorative wall honouring the School’s Founder, Jacques Lecoq (photo courtesy of fellow Lecoq classmate Lotte Lings Greir).

## PROLOGUE

### Finding my Fire

*Deviens le masque neutre dans le feu ainsi que le feu lui-même. Tu incarnes le feu. Le feu n'est pas nécessairement fait des flammes rouges et des étincelles. Le feu est aussi unique que l'idée que tu te fais du feu, et donc de ton interprétation.*<sup>1</sup> (Jacques Lecoq, November 26, 1990)

During the two years I spent training at *L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq*, I was one of 50 students representing 15 different countries from five different continents. French is the language of instruction at the School,<sup>2</sup> yet in our first year, spoken word and daily speech in our studies was practically non-existent—except for the teachers’ lessons and their colourful commentaries—like the italicized feedback cited above, given to me barely a month into the program after my interpretive portrayal of *feu* (fire). The suggestion was for me to *become* the fire—a concept far removed from how I understood “fire.” This feedback illuminates one of the greatest challenges for students of Lecoq’s work: how to disconnect cognition from the meaning in words to the experience and feelings in the body.

On my first day at the School,<sup>3</sup> other international students and I gathered in the foyer outside *la Grande Salle* (the Great Hall). Built in 1876, the School is a prominent Parisian landmark located in the city’s 10th arrondissement once known as *Le Central*, a boxing arena and gymnasium in the early twentieth century. In eager anticipation, we gathered around Lecoq, who proceeded to welcome us and discuss the days and weeks ahead. It was an electrifying

<sup>1</sup> Translation: Become the neutral mask in the fire as well as be the fire. You embody fire. Fire is not necessarily red flames and sparks. Fire is unique to your understanding of fire, and thus to your interpretation (my translation, in-class statement).

<sup>2</sup> The Lecoq School is often referred to as *L'Ecole*. Henceforth I will distinguish my Lecoq training by the English translation, “School” (upper-case), from other education, pedagogy and references to schools and schooling (lower case).

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Lecoq founded *L'École Internationale de Théâtre* in Paris, France from 1956 until his death in 1999. The School is presently presided over by his daughter Pascale Lecoq. In 2000, Methuen published an English translation of his book *The Moving Body* (*Le Corps Poétique*). From this point forward, for reader ease, when Jacques Lecoq’s style or pedagogy is used without a date it refers to citation of this most comprehensive book.

moment as he began to speak and acknowledge our respective countries and languages—in French and only French. Fluency in French was not a criterion for admittance to the School. Nor was there an official translator interpreting Lecoq’s words. This was deliberate. Slowly, pockets of low-voiced murmurs began to pop up around the semi-circle. Veritable strangers, those of us who had some command of the language, began translating for those who had little to none. There was the Swedish student speaking in his accented English to the Japanese student, who also spoke English as a second language. Scandinavian students communicated to one another through their shared northern Germanic languages, while the British, Canadian and American students helped the second language interpreters with their English interpretations of the French. Lecoq then commented on how we had all arrived with such busy bodies, in the way of varying energies, influenced by our socio-historical cultural contexts—replete with the polyglotism of our individual verbal languages. In time, he continued, we would learn to look to our lives, to listen, observe, sense, feel and express the experiences that lay within the language of our bodies—despite how the exercises we would embark upon did not rely on spoken language.

In the first semester of the first year, Lecoq introduced the technique of the Neutral Mask to suspend the facility of verbal language and begin a process of learning to be *disponible* — having both a state of openness and the freedom to receive.<sup>4</sup> I use “facility” here in the sense of speech as an expression of words. I include French words (such as *disponible*) directly in the text as these words more accurately capture the intended meaning. In translation, they tend to lose their embodied dimension According to Lecoq, in the absence of words—often correlated with a thinking process and verbal speech—the student can observe how language already exists in the

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<sup>4</sup> Taken from the noun *disponibilité*, to be *disponible* is a word commonly used at the Lecoq School. Its English translation ‘availability’ does not do it much justice. In the Lecoquian sense, it pertains more to a “state of discovery, of openness, of freedom to receive” (Lecoq, 2000, 38). At the Lecoq School, it is common to an actor’s process of creativity. Lecoq would ask that we the students remain both physically and intellectually ‘disponible’ to the work. This emphasis on a *disponibilité* of the body enables artistic decisions to form in the mind. *Disponibilité* works in association with its companion word *complicité*. Simon Murray describes *complicité* as collusion between the ensemble of performers and the performer-audience relationship: “a ‘collective imagining’. In the realm of *le jeu* (play) of Lecoq’s pedagogy, *disponibilité* is a precondition for play—*complicité* is an outcome of successful play. See Murray 2003, p. 71.

body and embodies his or her surrounding environment to re-discover the physical self in it anew. Relying on sensorial awareness, students work back to a place before the words of spoken language. This process asks the student to be *disponible* in the mask, to attune to her or his body in motion as it responds and reflects, to become the eyes, ears, face and voice in re-action. The student, physically *branché* (connected) in this *etat* (state of being), cultivates an experiencing of ‘self’ in the body.

I do not think anyone one of us was prepared for how difficult it would be to quiet the noise necessary for the journey into the poetic body. We were being asked to learn in a way we never had experienced learning before, with no point of reference, and even more difficult, with a concurrent demand that we simultaneously un-learn. It required developing an awareness of how social codes etched in our bodies are set in motion through “lived experience” (Murray, 2003, p. 35; van Manen, 1990). The process of identifying these particularities, of decoding one’s own set of codes through the senses, gestures and movement, is therefore highly personal. The journey becomes a process of a return to the beginning of the complex socially sanctioned ways that we, had learned to move, think, speak, and in essence, ‘be’ unconsciously—often in the same institutionalized spaces that contributed to our socializing through the instrument of our bodies (Cooks and Warren, 2011). Thus, the neutral mask becomes for many the first journey students take into the moving language of their body—a journey unlike any other.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

### **A Personal Narrative**

There are three masks:

The one we think we are,

the one we really are,

and the one we have in common (Jacques Lecoq, *The Moving Body*, 2000)

This dissertation represents a pedagogical experiment—in both the writing of the research, and facilitation of an applied practice field study. Each engaged the work of Jacques Lecoq's Neutral Mask (NM) as a method to explore English-language learning (ELL) in mainstream secondary school education. The project adopts a transdisciplinary<sup>5</sup> and autoethnographic approach to its topic, and highlights a particular supplemental process to learning a language—relating the body to verbal speech. By transdisciplinary, I mean that I merge and exceed the boundaries of my background in the generally distinct fields of theatre, education and interdisciplinary studies. By a supplemental process,<sup>6</sup> I refer to a mode of learning that goes beyond current and traditional practices in English-language learning, whether in schools or public programmes, to create a new conceptual and methodological framework. A body supplement to teaching or supplemental (adjective), considers ELL/settlement 'praxis' for learning through the vehicle of the body.

Foundational to my research is a view of movement as central to language acquisition and meaning. Throughout this project, I demonstrate how nonverbal communication (*kinesics*)

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<sup>5</sup> Traditionally transdisciplinary research unites the expertise of different investigative teams, where each contributes their specific field 'know-how' to a study. Working in collaboration, the disciplines collectively trouble-shoot complexities that arise as result of coming together as a whole. The new assemblage, now a transformed entity, exceeds ('to go beyond' hence the prefix 'trans') the parameters of what each individual field contributed. See Sumara and Davis, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> As I move through the first two chapters of the dissertation I outline theoretical steps towards the development and design for my vision of a body-supplemental process. This represents the thinking that helped me prepare for the practical/applied project of my field studies, recounted in chapter three. Simply stated, the 'supplement' acts as an adjunct to be incorporated into current ELL curricula practices.

contributes to the acquisition and development of English-language proficiency in particular to assist newcomer-to-Canada-youth (NTCY) in their settlement and integration.

Much of this research derives from a theatre-based performance practice I undertook as a student training under French theatre pedagogue Jacques Lecoq. Specifically, I learned to apply the techniques of Lecoq's Neutral Mask (NM) (Figure 0:2) practice to English-language learning for NTCY. This approach defines a "back-to-basics" method of language learning that examines body language as the primal foundation of expression—so necessary for voice. I employ the object of the mask to traverse the gap between theatre and classroom; my research represents how and to what end.

Because this research study examines how body-based learning can supplement ELL, it also speaks to my own personal history and narrative, which are germane to the material. Four structuring aspects of my personal narrative inform this work: first, my body knowledge of the NM; second, its impact on me personally as a form of expression; three, its potential application to ELL curricula; and four, how to transfer this knowledge into mainstream classrooms as a teacher-friendly supplemental approach to ELL.

When I first set out to transfer Jacques Lecoq's NM pedagogy from the world of theatre training to institutionalized education, I did not anticipate the degree to which the experiment would indirectly un-mask an autobiographical narrative and dimension to this work. I quickly realized that I needed to integrate this autobiographical material to frame and explain the larger investigation. Slowly, clue-like bits of understanding began to take shape in my experience of my own body during language learning. Scholars working in areas of contemporary cognitive studies like George Lakoff (1999) deem this type of unconscious thinking coming to the surface as a function of the "cognitive unconscious." In the cognitive unconscious, stored processes of

cognition (i.e., the mental act of taking in knowledge) act as part of a nonconscious mental process that exists beyond awareness.<sup>7</sup> As a non-traditional philosophical approach to the research, the cognitive unconscious calls into question common terminology covered in the study like the words “body,” “learning,” “language” and “integration.”

This research unmasked how much my childhood was one caught between the uneducated spoken dialect of my Italian cultural roots and the educated English language of my schooling, and how this informed my research topics. Lecoq’s pedagogy resembles a process that aims to reverse the order of expression from speech to the silence before speech. So, then, did I became aware of the connection, the unconscious divide I had created between body, home and school as environments, specifically between the dialect of my ancestral family (*Abruzzian*) and the English language I was learning and speaking. These two early forms of verbal expression collided during my time at the Lecoq School. There, I learned how the body, at least how I experienced *my* body, was not the object below the “me” of my mind. It did not reveal itself to me merely through the reach of my vision. It was not a representation of a “me”—how I see myself in my mind’s eye. Rather, I learned how much my body *is* me. I am it, and exist as such outside of spoken language.

Learning to work as an embodied performer seemed to turn the spotlight on a deep linguistic cross wiring of the cultural recognition and performance of my ‘self’ in my body. Through analysis (*graphy*) my own experience (*auto*) revealed a tension between the language of my cultural origin and English as the dominant social language expressed through my body—an othering of self to self. Consequently, autoethnography as a qualitative form of inquiry began to play a bigger role in the research. This story, my story, had to become part of the larger narrative.

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<sup>7</sup> At almost fifty years old, cognitive science is a relatively new research discipline that views cognition and cognitive acts from a much broader purview to include physiological functions: “visual processing falls under the *cognitive*, as does auditory processing”, including mental imagery, emotions, and language. See Lakoff, p. 11.

In opening up my investment in this research, I realized that I needed an autoethnographic approach in order to develop an understanding of Lecoq's NM, and its potential. In this introductory chapter, I explore autoethnographic narrative, which underlies the larger pedagogical experiment by describing the critical contributors of familial and social influences foundational to the research. Chapter one presents a theoretical base through which to explain the body, English language learning, and the notion of settlement through the consideration of the work of notable contemporary scholars who have helped shape the academic purview. Working across disciplines, there was no 'map' or guide to follow. Hence the selecting of these three themes was truly motivated by a visceral impulse, akin to making gut level choices so as to create language that could define what I do in an applied sense, providing a way 'into' the material.

In chapter two, I summarize and attempt to explain the practice of Jacques Lecoq, which actually represents the first of three studies. The Lecoq material troubles the theory and attempts to articulate the tensions of learning through the body—my body—clearer. The analysis of my experience at the Lecoq School serves both to explain the process of learning NM as physical theatre and exemplifies the unorthodoxy of this project.

The second field study occurred at the *Donato Sartori Centro Maschere e Strutture Gestuali*. The four-week, mask-making workshop with Sartori, a friend and collaborator of Lecoq, was an intensive experience meant to introduce users of the mask to the essential qualities of its creation. I utilized the Sartori Centro as a framework to open up an understanding of the neutral mask (and mask work in general). The training that I received there and my autoethnographic analysis of the experience helped me to develop a larger vocabulary, provided opportunity for intense discussion, and to develop further understanding of the potential of this

non-traditional evocative object as a pedagogical tool.

The third study was a 4 week, two day a week pilot study of how NM could be used in an English language-learning classroom of a mainstream secondary school. I worked with 30 students ranging between 14-17 years of age, all newcomers to Canada, who were in various stages of English language acquisition. Through participant observation techniques, I critically examine the potential and limits of this kind of work as a supplement to a regular ELL classroom practice.

The fourth chapter merges critical awareness and critical discussions reflective of the overall field studies and data collection to consider the challenges and implications a neutral mask supplemental may present for the English language-learning classroom.

## **Backstory**

Commonly used as a literary device, a backstory references the contents that guide the reader to interpret and more fully understand the narrative. Given how my personal history as a researcher-practitioner helped define the conceptual framework of this research as, in part, autoethnographic, the inclusion of my backstory can help set the stage, so to speak, for the purpose, rationale, questions and significance of my study.

Yet what are the right moments of my life history to capture the story best? They act less as coherent narratives and more like puzzle pieces, but when aligned on paper and reshaped through words, the cohesive sense making remains an elusive ordering of life events. Autoethnography is a reflexive, qualitative research method that can piece together isolated bits of information (McIlveen, 2008; Loughran, 2002). I am interpreting the research topic as a reflective account, one positioned from a mid-life perspective on nostalgic and transformative events as recalled

from a younger period in my life. Furthermore, the earlier life excerpts to which I allude were of ‘messy’ life moments, full of insecurities and self-consciousness. As a young person, the actual living of these moments was anything but clear and orderly, and therefore unlike how I outline and share them in this study. Indeed, a larger concern shaping this autoethnographic project is that as long as I can remember, my Canadian world was separate from and contrasting with my lived reality—an opposition that led me to experience my life in Canada as a life “outside” of myself.

Grounding research in lived experience does not come without problems. Max van Manen (1990) wrote “in its most basic form, lived experience involves our immediate, pre-reflective consciousness of life: a reflexive or self-given awareness which is, as awareness, unaware of itself” (p. 35). Oddly enough, my experience of recounting the divide between home and school languages that I felt has allowed me to piece together a sense of peace in my body. In particular, this is true of my first chapter, which reflects a bricolage of ideas that evolved out of my lived experiences. Quilting together experiences also reflects the fickle inconclusiveness of living life and its glories, trials and tribulations. Both the circuitous route of my experiences and the analyses of my experiences not only inform how I arrived at the dissertation topic, but also exemplify the need to reframe and reshape language learning.

With the passing of my parents, my father in 1995 and my mother in 2013, both of whom I spoke almost exclusively in our regional dialect, the distance has widened between the practice of my heritage language and the Anglophone world in which I predominantly live. Yet the movement of *Abruzzese* remains in my body. I can locate experiences from a place where, according to Chris Shilling (1993), lies the elusive quest to (re)discover the nature of personal identity. These experiences are how I made meaning of the world. In many ways, this research

culminates an embodied arc that began with my verbal language of cultural origin being at perpetual odds with the generally non-reciprocating English speaking social context in which I learned to express my self *as* “self.”

***Nel mezzo del cammin<sup>8</sup>*** (Halfway through my Journey)

During the stages of creating and eventually completing this dissertation, I have found myself returning more to the significant complexity of my primary language during the early years of my social development. By the time I, the third child in my family, was born, my parents had already experienced a decade’s worth of acculturative adjustments as new Canadians. Their experience was critical to my growth, as were their greater indulgences of me in comparison to the more traditional approach to my two older siblings’ upbringing. Born in December, my parents faced the decision whether or not to enrol me (prematurely) in junior kindergarten or hold me back. They chose the former.

Off I went the youngest of the family, to join my sister and brother before me. I was a tiny pre-schooler, the smallest in the class and, in many ways perhaps developmentally unready. Understanding the simplicity of a child’s perspective, I can now see how I began to disassociate all that was unfamiliar at school (e.g., the classroom space, teacher, playtime, snack-time, naptime etc.) from associations I had made with the familiarities of home. In the parameters of that first classroom, those new experiences were different from the only safety and comforts I knew. I understood the difference as being a difference of my life versus being “Canadian” (*Canadese* in my mother tongue). Although I too was a Canadian, or so said my birth certificate, the sense of unfamiliarity overwhelmed me, and generated a perpetual sense of being out of place. I felt different, a difference enhanced, in part, by my olive-coloured skin so unlike my

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<sup>8</sup> This famous line that begins the first verse of the first triplet in Dante Alighieri’s Divine Comedy (c. 1208-1321)

fellow classmates. In hindsight, though, the difference was more about how much information or knowledge of this new world lay outside the realm of my comprehension and familiarity. The difference lay primarily in the English language. It consistently reminded me of what I was (culturally) not.

Unspoken, invisible and pervasive, my elementary school experiences in English from grades 1-6 steadily created a divide, in the sense of “Here at school we do X” versus “At home we do Y.” Like any two fundamental binaries, the difference intensified through comparison. When I did not understand English, I learned to watch, observing what my classmates did and copied it accordingly. Educational theorist Lev Vygotsky’s (1978) claimed that during a child development, young children need a visual reference first before they can decide what it represents and how to name it. This child’s act of imitation would manifest itself through various forms of theatre, like mime and mask, and later, eventually become a significant aspect of my doctoral research that correlates observation, socio-cultural influence and meaning making.<sup>9</sup>

As a child, I learned to compartmentalize my school and home environments, an act that enabled me to avoid feeling different yet also need difference to feel myself. I made a concerted effort to become fluent in the dominant language, while remaining conscious of how doing so was distancing myself from my original cultural dialect. Indeed, a child growing up in a home where neither parent spoke English made my proficiency of the language imperative. It was also my parents’ belief that I should learn to do so at school. In *Teaching to transgress* (1994) bell hooks writes, “If one was not from a privileged class group, adopting a demeanor similar to that of the group could help one to advance” (p. 178). I can recall the fear in my body when preparing to vocalize new, intimidating sounding words—what back then in my immigrant family we

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<sup>9</sup> Vygotsky equated fixed, indicatory pencil markings, i.e. written words, as signs of visual gestures or “writings in the air”. See Vygotsky, 1978, p. 107.

referred to as “big words” like “magnificent” or “lovely.” How insignificant they seem now. Yet, at the time, they were so much more decorative than exceeding simpler versions of “great” and “nice.”

I also recall my heart pounding as I cautiously rehearsed new words in my head before having them “break the air” (*casse l’air*), my very act of rehearsal indicative of a fear of saying them incorrectly, sounding stupid, and revealing an incompetency I had come to associate with the comparatively uneducated language of my family’s dialect at home. One cultural expression I grew up hearing translates to “Eat like your mother made you”—a reminder to heed from whence you came (e.g., your father’s loins, mother’s womb, etc.). Every so often, I would carelessly let a word, phrase or incorrect pronunciation slip, such as “sangwich” for sandwich, or “close the lights” for turn off the lights. The reactions these slips elicited—a giggle, a correction—felt similar to what Sara Ahmed (2004) describes when writing about the complex phenomenon of shame; a demonstration of failure, a revelation of my secret, exposes to “myself that I am a failure through the gaze of the ideal other” (p 83). Living two feet in two cultures in two languages, I learned to create and inhabit a divide between the social and the familial. This then became, for me, a way of performing self in both arenas (Munoz, 2006; Felman, 2002).

As I grew older, theatre would become the creative agent that helped bridge my familial European home life with my Anglo-Canadian outside social world. I have always loved the theatre. As a tween, I joined a local community group in the suburbs of Toronto. I begged my parents to enrol me in Saturday acting classes at a studio downtown. This was no small feat. The youngest child of rural Italian emigrants, theatre was something only “other kinds” of people pursued. Even at a young age, I already understood this to mean “Canadian” people, or English speakers of Anglo-Saxon descent. My father in particular was not very sympathetic to this

yearning of mine for theatre. I think it was largely because theatre was foreign—far outside the realm of his upbringing and experience. The paradox of the situation now brings a smile to my face, as he was a foreigner in a foreign land. Like most immigrants, my father came to Canada to make a better life for his family. He did not understand theatre, registering it as too ambiguous. In the end, my mother convinced him it would be good for me—something to keep my curious mind busy and out of trouble. Over the years, then, my passion for the theatre deepened. In high school, I practically lived in the drama room. After graduation, I then furthered this knowledge and love with my post-secondary training at *L'Ecole Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq* and Lee Strasberg's Actors Studio in New York. Years of accredited professional pursuits would follow, and to this day, theatre continues to inform my place in the world.

Beyond all the emblematic aspects typically associated with theatre (the smell of the grease paint, the roar of the crowd), I now recognize its larger purpose and the draw it had on me of all those years ago. Theatre allowed me the space to explore self-expression, to give voice to my story and perception of the world outside the parameters of my home-life, culture, heritage language, and social designation. It released the speech limitations of my childhood (richly nuanced by kinaesthetic, gestural articulations) now enabled through the acquisition, proficiency, and dominance of the English language. Theatre let me suspend the limits and boundaries of how family knew/required me to be. Theatre offered me a place where I could feel as the French saying goes, *bien dans ma peau* (comfortable in my skin), to explore the ‘me’ I knew me to be, and in my own body.

As for those Saturday acting classes, not only did my father agree to them, he would drive me to the downtown studio and be waiting to drive me home, unwavering in his support for my love of the theatre for years to come. I like to think my passion for the stage opened up a whole

other side of life in Canada for my parents. The apple does not fall too far from the tree. Emulating my father's courage to immigrate to Canada, stepping outside his culture, his language, and his rural European understandings of the world, I too have travelled a similar road, albeit by journeying through the theatre.

### **Me, Moi, Me<sup>10</sup>: embodying states of being**

English became the language of my exact expression, but it expressed thoughts that somehow have always remained Latin. (Martel, 1996, p. 18)<sup>11</sup>

In *Pedagogy and Politics of the Body* (1999) author Sherry Shapiro shares a poignant moment when as a former dancer transitioning into academe, a professor asked how she thought of the body in the act of dance. Without missing a beat, Shapiro answered, “We don’t think about our bodies in dance!” (p. ix). Upon reading this reply, the proverbial light bulb went off in my head. I completely related to Shapiro’s response. When I set out to do a PhD, it did not occur to me the degree of difficulties I would encounter in writing a dissertation that predominantly speaks about the body. Or rather, in order to make meaning of the experience—in an academic context—the writing required that I find coherent language by which to express the body, or should I say, the concept of embodiment. Ironically, throughout years of professional theatre performance and repertory work as a core member of *Theatre de la Jacquerie*, I had my fair share of artistic challenges, but this has been the biggest intellectual challenge I have faced.

Beyond the student experience at the Lecoq School and the foreign language/culture displacements of studying and living abroad, my backstory is intended to detail how deeply my thesis draws on my English language learning struggles as a first generation Canadian, and

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<sup>10</sup> *Moi* and *Me* (pronounced *Meh*) are translations of the English ‘Me’ in French and Italian respectively.

<sup>11</sup> Quote taken from Yan Martel’s 1996 novel titled ‘Self’.

daughter of immigrant dialect-speaking parents. The development of my first non-English language occurred through the oral and the audible. English instruction taught at school was my only formal educational experience with language learning. Hence, the proficiency of my educated English instruction often conflicted with my heritage language, rendering it somehow less by comparison. I experienced it more as an un-ordered sense of disorder due to the lack of a traditional educational framework. The repercussions extended beyond the language. The English speaking me of school felt like an application superimposed on the ‘me’ I knew myself to be—the ‘self’ at home in my skin. Similar to the variations on the given name I was christened with, according to the language context required, it influenced the body expressions performed—Nicolina-Italian, Nicole-French, Nikki-English.

For these reasons, it would seem that a trip *back* to Europe, land of my people, could align my language and body, but it did not. My parent’s post-war relocation to Canada altered the authenticity of my cultural roots; in some ways, it severed them. When as a young adult I returned to the land from which my parents emigrated, I became aware of the in-between-ness of my hyphenated cultural identity. Ironically it was in the absence of language during my first year of studies at *Ecole Lecoq* that both freed and confused the systems of “self” I had known. I began to see how the ‘me’ in my body was distinct from the ‘me’ I communicated through language(s), and that these two “me’s” did not feel like one in the same. The experience uncovered a conflicted space between the spoken language of my maternal/home-life and the English of my educated/social-life. These linguistic tensions were contained within my body. By becoming aware of how much as a young person I alternated between the rural dialect language of my parents’ ancestral region and the dominant school language of English, I gained greater consciousness of the near-invisible friction demarcating an incompetency in my body-of-origin

as compared to the more competent “educated body”<sup>12</sup> costumed by the English language (Carozzi, 2005, p. 32). Movements, gestures, and overall physical behaviour translated themselves according to the degrees of linguistic acceptance and/or tolerance.

Reflecting on these experiences consequently led me to consider what ELL could look like for contemporary newcomer youth in Canada, and how to better support acculturation through creating a visceral connection to their new surroundings (Johnson, 2007, p. 6). Uniting my Lecoq training with my own history and experience of language struggles, I began to consider how embodying language meaning could do more than assist the learning of English. It could empower newcomer students’ body-of-origin self.

Prior to attending *École Lecoq* I had never had an extended learning experience outside the formal education of a provincially-funded, Ministry-run, Anglo-Canadian institution. Therefore, I never had experienced another way of acquiring knowledge outside of doctrines formed in and dominated by the English language. Before Lecoq, I had never questioned consciousness as something outside the mind’s knowing, or rather how the mind is often mistaken for the brain and commonly regarded as the vehicle of knowing and knowledge (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p. 401). For that matter, I had never stopped to question how it is that I know what it is I know, and how I arrived at knowing what I do. I had certainly never considered whether the body possessed knowledge or language outside of consciousness and a spoken language system of verbal communication. My experience at Lecoq revealed what Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (1999) calls “kinaesthetic consciousness”—consciousness as a body awareness not limited to the mind’s interpretation (p. 131). In the quiet silence of my first months *chez Lecoq*, I began to learn about

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<sup>12</sup> “An educated body, having the competence to produce discourses about discourses, is not constructed as just another body, but as a qualified body. Such a body is valued in the labor market, is perceived as prestigious and is judged as morally superior.” See Carozzi, 2005, p.32.

*le corps* (the body<sup>13</sup>) through exercises that positioned it as the living centre of experience.

Although my training of Lecoq's physical theatre occurred many years ago, it completely altered how I meet knowledge within learning experiences; subsequently it left me questioning my experiences, too. As our teacher, Lecoq rarely answered questions in class. He was known to say on more than one occasion "*montre moi – n'explique pas*"—"show me—do not tell me." His reasoning was to diminish the mind's thinking, to drop conscious awareness into the body's thinking—areas that neuroscience research today have identified as a biology of consciousness or the embodied mind (Damasio, 1999; Johnson, 2007).

I offer this example to demonstrate how a process of opening body awareness can free up the ability to receive knowledge. Imagine for a moment the research style for these observations on language and the body posed through Lecoq's physical pedagogy instead of analytic theory. The first step would be to *préciser la recherché* (narrow the research) by determining the *theme* (a word that apart from pronunciation means the same in both English and French), much like locating a writing theme to articulate an objective. Yet the search of *theme* differs in a Lecoquian context insofar as that instead of looking *to* and drawing *from* outside sources to validate the direction of the theme/objective, the process of work initiates from within. For instance, I would look for affective descriptors that best resonate *with* and *for* me as a theme. These might include frustration, helplessness, shame or other states of being that best exemplify a personal association with my chosen theme of, for example in this current research project, the theme of language and the body. It need not necessarily be an associative word. I could draw from a colour, an object, a feeling, or an experience that would not only tailor the theme to my interpretation of it, but also offer a dimension outside linguistic meaning. I then would seek ways to express the theme

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<sup>13</sup> Although the direct English translation of the French *corps* is 'body', in a Lecoquian sense *le corps* takes on greater dimension. I will take this up further in Chapter 2.

physically using the language of *mimage*. *Mimage* is a *portmanteau* word that collapses and fuses the two words ‘mime’ and ‘image’ into a single term to define an internal dramatic state as expressed through the body (Lecoq, 2000, p. 166). In *mimage* I become both the *personnage* (character) in the embodied state as well as *becoming* the state.<sup>14</sup>

The skill of Lecoq’s technique lies in how, as the character embodying the theme, I am not solely a human “metaphor” acting out a psychological expression (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p.3). Working from a drama education perspective, Burcu Yaman Ntelioglou (2012) explains embodied pedagogy as a “multimodal form of self-expression (...) it integrates the visual, audio, sensory, tactile, spatial, performative, and aesthetic, through physical movement, gesture, facial expression” (p. ii).<sup>15</sup> For example, in a Lecoquian context, if I were to choose the word *colere* (anger) as theme, the anger is not merely expressed through commonly represented ideas of angry behaviour—gestural or vocal actions like pulling at the hair on one’s head, pacing, pumping fists in the air, shouting and so forth. Rather, I exude the theme and thus become it. Put another way, Vygotsky (1934/1986) hypothesized this dynamic as the internalization of words, a process which is viewed from the inside (Rieber and Carton, 1987, p. 244). Internalizing the external visual environment activates processes that engage meaning, which in turn introduces the subjectivity of understanding. Vygotsky gestures toward this folding and unfolding of meaning, when he notes:

Anyone listening to a speech and understanding it appreciates the words and their meaning in his own way, and the meaning of the speech will be a subjective one every time, no more and no less than the meaning of a work of art. (Vygotsky, 1971, p. 42)

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<sup>14</sup> I address a broader repertoire of mime influenced Lecoquian vocabulary in section one ‘Language in the Body’ of Chapter 4.

<sup>15</sup> Ntelioglou includes the “attention to pronunciation, intonation, stress, projection of voice, attention to spatial navigation, proximity between speakers in space, the use of images and written texts, the use of props (costumes, artefacts), music and dance” in the enrichment of an embodied language and literary education. See Nteliouglo 2012, p. iii.

In this regard, Lecoq's work resembles a mélange of dance and visual art as the body emotively interprets sensation through expressive gesture of movement<sup>16</sup> (Arnheim, 1974). Here, the theme of anger is not a borrowed representation. Rather it connects to a definition of how each individual comes to understand anger. It is also, why Lecoq's pedagogy insists on discovery and development of the individual physical self of each student. This is similar to the personalized way in which each individual spectator will receive it.

In the context of this thesis, I then consider reception of the sensation in the social of the new cultural environment. My theme will not resemble your theme, or put another way, *et je suis responsable, c'est la définition de moi*, or “I am responsible for its definition to me.”

### **Past Experience, Present Experiment**

Some of the preceding central elements of my personal experience as “backstory” are not so much behind me, as in traditional backstory, as they are animating forces for this research. In this instance, a conceptual framework based on Lecoq's methodology (modified to work in complicity with the ELL classroom) aims to inspire the same level of intimacy, commitment, and personal responsibility to the language-learning experiences of youth who are newcomers to Canada. This is an experiment that, as Elizabeth Ellsworth (2005) writes, “Promises, as a consequence, quite different opportunities and challenges for the students and teacher” and which I would venture to add, for the researcher as well (p.5). I invite the reader into my experiment, to view an alternative understanding and approach English language learning instruction and practice.

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<sup>16</sup> “Perceptual expression does not necessarily relate to a mind “behind it.” See Arnheim, 1974 p. 451.

As a physical theater artist and a doctoral student, I wear two hats in this research. Crossing over from a world of theatre and performance into academia and theory, I am deeply grateful to have encountered the work of Dennis Sumara and Brent Davis' (2008). They helped me find a way to make sense of my two hats as compatible. In particular, their book *Complexity as a Theory of Education*<sup>17</sup> offers insight into possibilities of what they call a "young and evolving" nature of interacting emergent forms for education (p. 33). Sumara and Davis both recognize the need to realize "new stable patterns" *vis-à-vis* educational forms and the study of phenomena in the relatively young field of interdiscursivity in educational research (p. 36). However, they also caution against the contradictions in the emergence of new forms and patterns and the undoubtable encounter of "paradigm wars" that traditional disciplines can engage in when placed in a transdisciplinary context (p. 36).

Sumara and Davis' concepts resonate for me with my own Lecoq experience. As his students, we were often told that we were training for a theatre that does not yet exist. Lecoq's pedagogy was and is not so much a formula or design to follow, as it is a working method that he intended for us to adopt and grow and reconfigure (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002). This aspect of Lecoq's work is precisely why its methodological embodied approach would be an ideal model for my transdisciplinary study of the body in the context of language learning and settlement/integration.

Lecoq alumni have developed his work beyond areas explored at the school. However, I am not aware of any who have taken it this far out of its context. Suzy Willson (2000), interviewing former, Lecoq graduate and Founder of Helikos International School of Theatre

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<sup>17</sup> I would like to acknowledge that Sumara and Davis speak to transdisciplinarity in relation to complexity thinking and complexity theory in this article. I do not take up my intersecting of differing disciplines in this context. However I am partial to the concept of a 'complexity movement' which the authors claim impossible to define, perhaps it "might be positioned somewhere between a belief in a fixed and fully knowable universe and a fear that meaning and reality are so dynamic that attempts to explicate are little more than self-delusions." See Sumara and Davis, 2008, p. 34.

Giovanni Fusetti, asks, “Do you think it is dangerous to discuss Lecoq’s work in an academic context?” To which Fusetti replies, “It is very dangerous, because it is a completely practical work, in the sense that it’s really understandable only through practice.”<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps cursed by the “danger” of taking Lecoq’s work out of its context manner, as Fusetti alludes to, I too have experienced several methodological and explanatory dilemmas, dilemmas that echo the words of Jean-Luc Nancy (1994), who claimed that to write about embodiment is to fail even before one begins. The obstacles structuring this research were:

1. I have been looking to language to explain a unique performance method that essentially rejects words and derives from the sensory-motor experience.
2. As a doctoral student in a Faculty of Education, I was importing resources outside of education (e.g., cognitive linguistics, embodied philosophy, neuroscience, and dance) to explain the body. Simultaneously, many of these other disciplines have been chipping away at contemporary understandings for the mind-body binary of traditional thought as a means to reshape, mark, and define new vocabulary for the body.
3. My act of borrowing from many different fields and theorists of contrasting views within those same fields created other and new frictions, such as views on the body, language and what necessitates and/or qualifies learning (curricular, cognitive, and so forth).

Dennis and Sumara address elements of my obstacles by arguing that contemporary research on pedagogy should not focus on ways to understand the purpose of formal education, but rather, what work it is *doing*—“what it is intended to do” (p.34). My proposed approach to seeing the body as supplemental to ELL looks beyond the purpose of providing English proficiency. Instead, it positions the student as more of a “participant in the production of ideas,”

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<sup>18</sup> It is important to include that as the interview continues Willson and Fusetti discuss how Lecoq was not at all “*anti-intellectual, he just realized that in the moment of performance you have to put ideas on hold – you have to be intelligent with your body.*” See Willson, p.6 original italics.

and positions ELL as a “domain of inquiry” into the whole of their settlement integration process (p.35). As result of my approach, the application of ELL strategies has far-reaching repercussions on the body. Arguably, the discipline of education traditionally has not emphasized this dimension of language learning, a dynamic perhaps abetted by the social role that school plays in culture where (understandably) there is a direct focus on the necessity of sharing common language (McLaren, 1998, p. 188). Yet what are the consequences of this structuring absence? What foundational structures continue to affirm and confirm difference, identity, and cultural distinction?

## **Research Questions and Objectives**

This research analyzes English-language learning, the pedagogy of the Neutral Mask, and how both can shape or affect youth who are newcomers to Canada. It traces three overarching and interconnected objectives: first, to present pertinent scholarly readings, views, and critical thinking on the body, current English language learning, and newcomer settlement programming; second, to introduce, break down and transpose the applied performance-based technique of Lecoq’s Neutral Mask; and third, to demonstrate how these findings can be incorporated in language learning as an alternate body-supplemental method to assist the integration process for newcomer youth.

The basic concept behind the study is to explore how external life aspects of newcomer youth settlement and adjustment (e.g., health, housing, community, legal services, and more) find their way inside the designated language-learning focus of our classrooms. In particular, I was interested in how the everyday realities of settlement integration are contained within the biology

of the body. I wanted to examine how newcomer students embody the external settlement tensions as they begin to establish their lives in Canada.

When I was first planning to explore workshops with newcomer youth, workshops that employ and transpose the pedagogy of Lecoq's Neutral Mask, I wanted to separate cultural adjustments from the language-learning experience and the schooling experience. The ELL classroom may not be responsible for these aspects of settlement, yet the obstacles and procedures to obtaining settlement and integration often affects newcomer students' experiences of learning. Keeping this hypothesis in mind, I ask the following questions:

- How can a modified Lecoquian process of embodied integration improve the means of transition and integration for newcomer youth?
- How can a body-supplemental process be included in ELL educational practices?
- How will students come to understand and accept an embodied engagement in newcomer education?

As I work to unpack the three independent chosen areas of study (NM, ELL, and NTCY) in answering these questions, the academic side of the study attempts to disrupt mainstream education's traditional approach to the teaching and learning of the English language and how it, in turn, implicates newcomer settlement. However, as a Lecoq alumnus, I am aware of the disruption NM poses to language learning curricula. Therefore, I am also cognizant of the risks in transferring a completely experiential-based work beyond its theatre-performance origins to a new setting—the classroom dedicated to language learning. The tension between these two points of view in turn corresponds to other relevant binary oppositions: mind/body, alternative schooling/traditional methods, practice/theory, verbal speech/symbolic movement, foreign/familiar and past/present. Any journey into awareness of the physical self, such as my

experience at the Lecoq School, is obviously a specialized area of study with a particular focus. While acknowledging this reality of physical theatre, this study is an exploratory unpacking of Lecoq's neutral mask, a theoretical testing, or, an attempt to examine how it can stretch beyond its intended *mise en scène* so that education can shift and benefit.

### **Subject Positioning: Embodying the Research**

My own social location has multiple influences on the research at hand. I am a white, queer, female, able-bodied child of middle-class immigrant parents, as well as a researcher with Lecoquian theatre training and a doctoral candidate in the field of education. These influences and identity markers shape the interpretive sense making of my impressions as an observer-researcher (Malinowski, 1922; Britzman, 2008). Why does this matter? The basic premise of qualitative research is not only to understand the experience of others, but also to understand how they make meaning of their experience (Seidman, 1991, p. 9). In a dictionary context, the definition of experience is of an experiment—a test or trial that falls in the realm of hermeneutics (the interpretation or making of meaning) (OED, 2013). I began to relate the significance of experience and understanding according to an embodied perspective and circumstance. Merleau-Ponty argued that the body is “my point of view upon the world” (1962, p. 81). As unique bodies, there are multiple, potentially infinite possibilities that could measure our experiences and how those experiences are, in turn, interpreted—in relation to others’ experiences. Positioning the body as the ground for a research method, one that relies on body movements to mediate and inform the field notes, guides me to determine modes of participant analysis. Therefore, despite having an outline and purpose to the activities scheduled in each field study, I gave precedence to what transpired in the movement, intersubjective activities and that which

formed through the tactile and kinaesthetic exchanges with other bodies (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p. 381). In other words, the focus of my eventual field study had a scholarly purpose, but how I engaged in the field, or rather, the designated ‘roles’ I needed to take on , played a large part in shaping the experience (and consequently my field notes). This will make itself clear in the forthcoming outline and design of the fieldwork. Suffice it to say, field study had integral links to the autoethnography that underpins all my research.

### **Why an Autoethnographic Study?**

According to Garance Maréchal (2009) autoethnography is a multi-purpose research approach or method that calls upon self-observation, which then weaves into the context of the ethnographic field study and its overall writing. By way of explanation, if this were a Hollywood film pitch, I would say that autoethnography acts as one of the main “characters” of the dissertation research’s story. Told from the protagonist’s point of view, it is critical to the film’s overall plot. Maréchal’s *Autoethnography* corroborates this analogy well:

Autoethnography broadly operationalizes three different conceptions of self: *self as representative subject* (as a member of a community or group), *self as autonomous subject* (as itself the object of inquiry, depicted in “tales of the self”), and *other as autonomous self* (the other as both object and subject of inquiry, speaking with his or her own voice). (p. 44, original italics)

Since my own research study integrates each of her three conceptions of self, I consider the fluidity of autoethnography in relation to its main purpose of narrating subjective experience. Maréchal points out that an autoethnographic approach is not just one form of alternative research methodology; it often encompasses other writing forms like autobiography, narrative

inquiry, personal narrative, or life history. As a bridge of “auto” (self) and “ethnography” (scientific description of peoples and cultures with their customs, habits etc.), it suggests the degree of personal account or narration involved will vary and depend on one’s self (Reed-Danahay, 1997).

For example, on many occasions throughout the writing of this research I learned I have a tendency to express myself in “Euroanglo,” or what resembles a colourful hybridization of ‘Fritalian’ English (Maréchal, Linstead and Chanlat, 2008). By this I mean, many of the foundational experiences I attempt to translate and transpose into words were lived in their native French and Italian, yet I am re-living them in the writing of this study through English.<sup>19</sup> This quality is particular to me, formed through my socio-cultural subject positioning. Similarly, Tessa Muncey (2010) validates autoethnography as a research method by claiming that “[i]t provides a creative approach for developing or refining one’s autoethnographic writing skills” (p. 124). She echoes Stacy Holman Jones (2005), who describes writing as a self-conscious, introspective process, one that tends to refuse conventional approaches and categorizations as she describes it, “the point of creating autoethnographic texts is to change the world” (p. 765).

In comparing autoethnography to ethnography, Tami Spry (2001) returns to Norman Denzin’s (1992) pioneering work on ethnographic research, claiming that autoethnographic research, informed by the oral and personal narratives, is a “radical reaction to realist agendas in ethnography and sociology” (p. 710). In autoethnography, no longer is there a privileging of “the researcher over the subject, method over subject matter,” modes of privileging that can “maintain commitments to outmoded conceptions of validity, truth, and generalizability” (p.20). This raises the question as to whether autoethnography is an acceptable practice *vis-à-vis* more common

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<sup>19</sup> I credit Maréchal here who, working alongside fellow researchers Stephen Linstead and Jean-Francois Chanlat (2008), the team employed the use of a new word ‘Euroanglo’ to discuss a critical comparison of Anglo-Saxon and French organizational analysis. I reference this piece largely to point out the emergence of the word *Euroanglo* as an amalgamation of two perspectives, influenced by autoethnography and particular to this unique study.

forms of qualitative methodology, such as the in-depth interview or focus group, where the outcome is determined more by a research design and less by interpretation.

Autoethnography questions some of these more dominant forms of qualitative methods, exploring whether the voice of personal experience can be a legitimate way to contribute to sociological understandings (Wall, 2008). Sarah Wall (2008), writing about the act of writing autoethnography, draws from P.T. Clough (1998), when she states that “[n]o subject can be a fully self-identified, fully aware, or fully intentional author because unconscious desire makes fully intentional subjectivity impossible (Clough, 1998). She concludes that autoethnography is an intriguing and promising method of qualitative study (p. 39).

Carolyn Ellis (2004) and Arthur Bochner (2014), two leading contemporary scholars analyzing autoethnography, have written extensively on autoethnographic practice as a way to change the landscape of self-reflexive observation by drawing from one's position as researcher to inspire readers to reflectively question their life view (Ellis and Bochner, 1996). Ellis describes autoethnography as “research, writing, and method that connects the autobiographical and personal to the cultural and social” (p. xix). Locating the self within the context of the cultural or social research, their method provokes change by virtue of the connections to and from the personal (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 739). In this instance, the self-narrative is a commentary on the situated-ness of self in the social context (Spry, 2001, p. 710). I agree with Ellis and Bochner when they claim that autoethnography offers considerable creative latitude, but my use of autoethnography deviates from theirs by displaying “multiple layers of consciousness” as the means to connect the personal to the cultural (Wall, 2008; Ellis and Bochner 2000, p. 739).

My research differs in that my “layers of consciousness” are explicitly located in motor movement and gesture of embodied memory.<sup>20</sup>

Rae Johnson, a friend, mentor, registered somatic therapist and scholar researching somatic oppression, introduced me to the work of Rosemarie Anderson, who became a key influence on this project. Reading Anderson’s (2002) “presencing” of the body in somatic research, I learned about embodied writing as a way to engage the experience of the human body as research praxis. As she describes it, “[t]he simple act of replaying experience from the inside out affirms life as embedded in the sensual world in which we live” (p. 40). The structuring of scholarly sources informs both the autoethnographic and the qualitative field-based aspects of my research.

This is not to say that autoethnography does not acknowledge the body. In a research study on autoethnography as a constructionist project, Ellis (2008), in collaboration with a former student Laura Ellingson, writes, “our work also reflects an embodied, messy process that is inextricably bound to the final products of our research” (p. 453). Autoethnography and embodied writing are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The body forms a large part of the process of research narrative in which the inquiry, observation and exploration derive from sensing, moving “lived body” experience (Downing, 2014; Ellingson and Ellis, 2008). Bearing in mind the transdisciplinary nature of my own research and the subjective nature of my relationship to the material, autoethnography represents a guiding methodology, in which an embodied writing helps unpack the physical sensation<sup>21</sup> contained within Lecoq’s pedagogy and experienced in the training. This approach functions as most conducive to my research goals.

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<sup>20</sup> I take up the notion of memory and the body in chapters two and four of the study.

<sup>21</sup> Anderson offers that writing from physical sensation is to privilege lexical expression of “what the body was sensing”. See Anderson 2002, p. 42.

## **Conceptual Framework and Overview (Figure 0:3)**

Qualitative research encompasses varied strategies in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. It differs from more conventional, quantitative approaches in the manner in which it seeks to understand human behaviour. The researcher recognizes his or her interaction and transaction with the participants and context of the material shapes the research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). I want to explore the implications of this dynamic, as it informs my research and by considering both the autoethnographic and qualitative research practices of participant observation that I use.

Rosemary Anderson (2000) claims: “Embodied writing is itself an act of embodiment, entwining in words our human senses with the senses of the world”<sup>22</sup> (p. 40). Out of the seven distinctive features that, according to Anderson, comprise embodied writing, the creative use of figurative and sensorial language is a powerful means by which to develop a vocabulary that shares personal experience and invites the reader into the narrative. This approach is key to not only help guide the reader through the intersecting three themes of applied theatre performance practice, English language learning and newcomer youth settlement integration, but also to help inspire a process for transposing Lecoq’s work out-of-context. I needed to create a vocabulary that would enable me to unpack the experience, convert the embodied expression into thought, and then, articulate the thinking of the movement of my experience. Initially this process felt like a mind-body collision as I tried to both translate and interpret feelings and sensations of an applied corporeal pedagogy. The most salient feature upon which Lecoq founded his School was the desire to reawaken the power of the body in the articulation of (poetic) language (Willson,

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<sup>22</sup> Anderson outlines seven distinctive features of embodied writing, they are: 1) Embodied writing contains true-to-life, vivid depictions intended to invite sympathetic resonance in the readers or audience. 2) Embodied writing includes internal and external data as essential to relaying the experience. 3) Embodied writing is written specifically from the inside out. 4) Embodied writing is richly concrete and specific, descriptive of all sensory modalities, and often slowed down to capture nuance. 5) Embodied writing is attuned to the living (*Leib* rather than *Körper* in Husserl’s [1952/1989] sense). 6) Embodied writing includes narratives embedded in experience, often first-person narratives. 7) In embodied writing, poetic images, literary style, and cadence serve embodied depictions and not the other way around. See Anderson, 2002, p. 88.

2000). He believed that as social beings, we place too much emphasis on words, text, language, and the need to analyze physical and visual expression for intellectual meaning. Thus, he saw a need to reposition the body in relation to intellectual discourse. Having experienced this firsthand, I now am attempting to move in the reverse direction, to translate these experiences back to an intellectual context.

In the more than sixty years of Lecoq's contributions to the theatre, several have written (and interviewed) him in an effort to grasp the visceral concepts of his teaching and learning practices. This can be challenging, for I too attempt to both locate words to explain his pedagogy, and transpose aspects of his pedagogy—that can resist verbal/intellectual explanation—to a completely different context. *Ecole Lecoq* is a body-research laboratory to which people travel from all over the world to experience his pedagogy, one that returns power to the body and the craft of articulating its own poetic language (Fusetti and Willson, 2000). I began to understand better fellow alumni who have also ventured into a similar landscape of having experienced Lecoq-training and then sought to write about the training. I now know why they sometimes resort to flowery, figurative language, descriptive images, motifs, colloquialisms, or the cross-referencing of interdisciplinary ideologies to capture his methods through an illuminative language that provokes and stimulates movement—movement that they, as I, only know through our experiences.

I turned to Simon Murray (2003), David Bradby (2006), Franc Chamberlain and Ralph Yarrow (2002), who have each written on Lecoq's practices and principles, to see how they analyzed the work. In each case, they offered a model for me to perceive and write about his pedagogy, and in contrast to the training that lives within my body. Once I faced the word-language challenge, I now needed to unpack how I would present the multiple prongs of my

transdisciplinary research. Visual theorist Griselda Pollock's (2008) clever use of frame and framing as a literary device helped me delineate a focus to my approach. In the literal sense, Pollock's art frame relates to an enclosed parameter, a structure that surrounds or encloses (in her case, a painting hanging in a museum). Conceptually, however, Pollock plays with framing as a process of formulating a strategy through crafty word play such as the framing of frames and unframing, as in the breakdown of "existing frames of knowledge" (p. 2). The frame directs the focus to navigate the observing viewer or "visitor" much like my own approach frames what can be a process that resists language and narrativizing in practice (Mastai 2007, p. 173).<sup>23</sup>

The notion of framing captures other dimensions in my study. There is the framing of a Canadian heritage through the English language, a language referenced through the frame of the body as the newcomer student framed within the parameters of his or her new country. Considering how my larger personal narrative is explored through embodied writing and told through different (trans) disciplines, Pollock's frames allow me to examine frames *within* frames, as they have an impact on this research and its structure. For example:

- **Frame One** represents the large external frame, or overarching structure of the autoethnographic first-person narrative centered in embodied experience. Embodied writing helped me connect and release what felt like speech limitations of my childhood (richly nuanced by kinaesthetic, gestural articulations) enabled through the acquisition, proficiency, and dominance of the English language.

- **Frame Two**, shaped through the autobiographical backstory of my youth, a "self" awakening during my training at the Lecoq School—and specifically through the applied practice of the neutral mask.

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<sup>23</sup> Museum studies "jargon". See Mastai, 2007.

• **Frame Three** represents the doctoral research that compelled me to find language that would both capture the experience and assist in a larger collective sense-making for the purposes of advancing knowledge and contributing to the existing fields of English language learning research and newcomer youth settlement integration. Drawing from diverse fields, I began to narrow critical intersections that would help address and flesh out my transdisciplinary research approach to interpret my embodied experience. I found theories and theorists whose work identifies various forms of sensory modalities, sensorimotor processes, and sensorial pre-processing as contemporary research areas that enabled me to bridge the inside with the outside of my lived experience. They include: neuroscience (Damasio, 1999; Rizzolatti, 2008); phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Sheets-Johnstone, 1999; van Manen, 1990); embodied cognition (Gallagher, 2005; Johnson, 2007); cognitive linguistics (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999); dance (Manning, 2007; Sellers-Young, 2002/2013; Shapiro, 1999); theatre (Eckard, 2013; Gallagher, 2007; Kemp 2012); and education (Davis and Sumara, 2007/2008; Freire, 1970/2009; Giroux, 1983/1985/2014; McLaren, 1999/ 2007). Taken together, their evocative, boundary-pushing, vivid use of language resonated with the poetic body I was trying to capture. They helped me find a voice to articulate my personal story as a first-generation Canadian growing up in a home where the uneducated rural dialect of my immigrant parents' homeland was my first experience with words, language, and interpersonal communication.

• **Frame Four** emerges from this theoretical foundation to support my personal narrative, and thus enables this study as an applied body-supplemental practice. Specifically, this fourth frame defines the structure and history of the Neutral Mask—beyond the applied practice of my own student reminiscences to the work I did as part of my field study. Here, I returned to Europe and the location of the mask's origins, the *Centre for Mask and Structural Gestures and Its*

*Affiliated International Museum of Mask* (henceforth referred to as the Sartori Centre or the Centro) in the Veneto region of Italy. I was particularly interested in exploring parallels between processes of mask making and language learning. I correlate how each adheres to specific instructional methods and practices toward obtaining effective results (the former in the way of a ‘playable’ mask, the latter in speech proficiency).

- **Frame Five** focuses on the experience at the Sartori Centre, which provided a solid historical foundation to inform the design of an applied in-class ELL field study that would include use of the Neutral Mask. Commensurate with my research questions, the intent of the ELL In-Class was threefold. First, it sought to bring awareness to the micro-processes of (non-)conscious physical engagements that help evolve and express language. Second, it explored how cultural parameters, influenced by English language learning (ELL), maintain dominant narratives of representation with respect to ethnic/racial minority students. Finally, it demonstrated how further study into how education approaches language learning as a method of integration can expand the current education/settlement practices and thus assist in the development of ethnic identity for new learners to Canada. It is noteworthy to mention that, while located in the ELL classroom, the focal point of the study considered the reshaping of language learning as a pedagogical space to develop further integration strategies, strategies that not only assist newcomer students with English language proficiency, but also address embodied newcomer identity as a process of cultural change.

- **Frame Six** addresses the questions of research methodology, specifically in how I began to shape and understand my qualitative studies, yet also recognize the limits to qualitative methodological strategies (i.e., typically interview and observation). The body-narrative inquiry I was exploring posed these limits for me. Several contemporary researchers redefining qualitative

research methods helped frame this work, such as Kathleen Gallagher (2008), who calls for creative, critical and collaborative approaches to qualitative inquiry in a book that compiles the work of scholars from different disciplines “wrestling with dilemmas of methodology” (p. 67). One of the most significant dilemmas she identified directly relates to my fieldwork—the participatory element.

Gallagher, drawing from Irish playwright Brian Friel (1999), describes participatory research as “a methodology of chance” due to the potential perils that can “subvert our own senses and sense-making” in the process (p. 73). My return to Europe as a student at the Sartori Centro, I would engage a participatory approach to conduct this field study. I needed to uphold and honour the *puissance* of the mask and mask work, in an effort to help transform its traditionally recognized use. As Gallagher points out, there was not only an element of chance, but of risk and surprise as well. The Sartori process of work reflected many of the principles of Lecoq’s pedagogy, so it felt like a refresher course—and thus a productive frame.

As each of these frames indicate, the participatory research method and In-class ELL field study would enable me to step back from a dominant cognitive-based writing alone by interacting with my participants, as I prepared to lead them through a series of modified Lecoquian movement techniques. I alternated between my field roles as researcher, instructor, participant, and observer. Each of these perspectives are explained through a combination of processes that include broad field notes recording observations and study feedback viewed from what Hammersley and Atkinson (2009) call the inside and from the outside, i.e. the “‘external’ view of an observer to an ‘internal’ view from the position of one or more participants” (p. 86). Thus, a participatory method was particularly relevant to my study due to the degree of participatory engagement, as seen in:

1. The relationship formed through the interactions and transactions of the study between my role and the study participants.
2. The significance of the social and physical contexts contributing to the study in order to explore the cultural influences that shapes the outcomes.
3. The focus of the investigation itself, which allowed ample room to accommodate the individual participants experience (D'Onofrio, 2003).

Other notable works that helped me strategize how to integrate these three aspects include Max van Manen's (1990) *Researching the Lived Experience*, Erin Manning's (2014) *Thought in the Act*, and *Playbuilding as Qualitative Research* by Joe Norris (2009). Consequently, what resulted as result of drawing from these works was an understanding that two separate field studies needed to be conducted that could expose the mask beyond a traditional written account. I wanted to create a framework that, at its core, allowed me to express the data in ways more favourable to my framework's artistic and embodied dimensions. The manner in which I conducted the research needed to correlate with the data necessary to obtain these outside and inside institutional perspectives.

Having outlined some of the prevailing methodological concerns and approaches, I now want to break down the organization of this project chapter by chapter, and the focus of each of its main sections. In this introduction, I have articulated my early experiences during my first year as a student at the Lecoq School, where, during movement study, I immersed myself in Lecoq's pedagogy. This led me to adopt the conceptual framework of how my transdisciplinary study of Lecoq's Neutral Mask pedagogy might lend itself to English language learning curricula in mainstream education. My training under Lecoq's tutelage served as an important source of understanding personal identity through the languages that I speak. My relationship to language

is one that is embodied; it has shaped how I move about the world in, or with a feeling of being outside my body. Detailing my personal narrative is no mere anecdote; it shapes a method I use to speak to my research questions and objectives. Using Rosemary Anderson's somatic research methods to inform both the autoethnographic and qualitative aspects of my research, I have defined a conceptual framework link and explored my three-transdisciplinary themes of the body, English language learning, and newcomer settlement integration.

Chapter One, "Theoretical Issues," offers a detailed and not entirely traditional survey of the literature that informs the objects of and approaches to my research. It begins with a pivotal experience that helped inspire my theory-based approach to this work and, subsequently, identified the problems in theorizing the transposed applied practice of Lecoq's work. Here, I explore parallels between the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jacques Lecoq, among a range of other scholars of phenomenology. In particular, I explore how the concepts of lifeworld and lived experience provide a vocabulary for the applied practice of my experience at the Lecoq School and for understanding the links between the body, English language learning, and newcomer settlement services as a topic. Indeed, after establishing the role of phenomenology as a methodological tool of my work, I move into an extended discussion of theories of the body, followed by an overview of contemporary settlement services and how their contradictions and absences affect English-language learning for newcomer youth.

Chapter Two's "Jacques Lecoq an Autoethnographic Analysis," I deliver an overview of Jacques Lecoq's pedagogy. This material not only intersects with the previous chapter's outline of phenomenology as a research language and methodology; it also troubles and reframes that methodology. I flesh out aspects of Lecoq's pedagogy to build an approach that supports an embodied component for English-language learning. I explore concepts of "the journey" and

present in more depth the Neutral Mask and its technique. I begin to unpack ideas about the body and movement through an engagement with Polanyi's tacit knowledge, Mira Felner's mimetic body-to-language analysis, and the notion of neutral space.

Chapter Three's "Research in the Field" is entirely comprised of a description of the two field studies: first, a mask master class at the Sartori Centre for Mask and Gestural Structures in Abano Terme, Italy, and second, an in-class mask/movement workshop in a mainstream high school ELL classroom. These two studies are not a comparative study, but rather, they speak to two different viewpoints that are both necessary to my research. Told through autoethnographic narratives, they are informed by two different perspectives—the former, my participation as a student, and the latter, my role as a teacher. In this chapter, I transpose in practice the methods derived from Lecoq's transposed pedagogy.

Having outlined the two studies, Chapter Four's "Emerging Critical Awareness" elaborates on the research findings and themes that result. This chapter speaks to the body, ELL, and settlement through the data collected, and in so doing, helps show how each of these three themes intersect and inform each other. The field research narratives expose larger social and pedagogical issues, and I outline some factors that could have contributed to the tensions in the field. I then offer suggestions as to how we may begin to revise English language learning by incorporating applied practice techniques, not merely tolerating them as mere extracurricular and recreational diversions.

In conclusion, I articulate in more detail the challenges and limitations of my field study, and reflect back at my journey as a theatre practitioner of Lecoq's pedagogy, as one who has crossed into the world of academia and brought these ideas into a new domain. This, a journey that I hope leads to enhance future modes of more embodied language learning curricula for non-

English speakers, especially newcomers to Canada who are youth and grappling with their own divided worlds, languages and selves.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Theoretical Issues

When a person learns another language, something is “undergone.” We “undergo” when we allow our encounters to modify our established conceptions. When we undergo experience, we ultimately have to change ourselves and our way of looking at the world. This is what true learning is – a modification of our very selves. (Wagner, 2002, p. 5)

Early in my doctoral study, I encountered the phenomenology of practice and the lived experience. This theoretical framework generated a new vocabulary for me to express and explore Jacques Lecoq’s pedagogy, as well as begin to connect academic theories that, at the time, felt like several disparate dots of inquiry. This chapter examines the transdisciplinary network of these animating scholarly voices<sup>24</sup> that have contributed to this study of the relationship between the body, language learning, and newcomer youth’s settlement. These theoretical ideas provide a framework by which I can begin to challenge existing ELL integration practices in relation to their current method of instruction in mainstream curricula.

In this chapter, I draw from a broad palette of ideas to articulate the applied experience of sensorial awareness brought into being through the Neutral Mask. I focus on the particular teaching premise and practice of phenomenology and critical pedagogy, especially the idea of a hidden curriculum and concentrating on the work of Peter McLaren and Paolo Freire.

The disciplines of education, psychology, education, and the performing arts each examine the body, language and settlement. Yet they do so from varying perspectives and to distinct ends. I deliberately engage with sources that allow each research topic to not only intersect, but also, by that intersection, emerge *as* connected; taken together as a set of theoretical voices, they

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<sup>24</sup> These include a core group of radical academics and their equally radical theories hail from diverse fields, they include: Antonio Damasio, Shaun Gallagher, Mark Johnson, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Peter McLaren, Sherry Shapiro, and Maxine Sheets-Johnstone.

offer a new way of interpreting the place of language instruction in education with the body as a learning source. Therefore, these theories act together as a frame of reference necessary to inform the concept of including a body-supplemental process to ELL.

### **Inspiration as Prelude: Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology**

In June of 2013, I attended an educational research conference that contextualized phenomenological inquiry as pedagogical practice in twenty-first century contexts. One particular colloque titled “Pedagogies of Practice: Phenomenological Inquiry in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Contexts” caught my attention. Chaired by Catherine Adams (University of Alberta), the panel responded to research material on Max van Manen’s (also present) hermeneutic phenomenological study. Each presenter—Catherine Adams, Michael van Manen, Yin (Iris) Yin, Kathy Howery, Erika Goble, Tone Saevi and Peggy Jubien (2013)—spoke to how bodily processes associate with sensorial function.

During this presentation, the ideas that caught my attention included the smallest and most obvious of interactive exchanges in education, and the subjectivity of their interpretations, such as the wide-eyed gaze of the teachers’ stares, the role of touch (haptic learning,) and the differences between visual and aural learners. The panelists shared how, in an effort to keep their writing focused and thus avoid the dense ambiguity of phenomenology’s concept of pre-reflective reflection, the question each returned to again and again in their writing was, ‘what is the source of my phenomena’ (van Manen, 1997/2007). What intrigued me was the simplicity of this question as an anchor to their writing, and yet, simultaneously, the complexity of the dimensions or effects this approach implied. That is to say, did their sources refer to the essence of being-in-the-world, as in: what are the physical human conditions that allow us to interpret the

source *as* source, of the essence? Perhaps it was a literal question, meaning the procured point or place of information origin. I began to understand that phenomenology asks more questions than it offers explanations or answers. Given my transdisciplinary work, I found this approach reassuring.

During the effervescent conversations after this conference, a group of us shared an “a-ha” moment. We realized we were misusing phenomenological theory in our own research. Namely, we were analyzing, theorizing and conceptualizing the pre-reflective experience—*before* the actual experience—a common paradox. I saw how phenomenology and the works of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and other pioneering scholars I discuss in this study all seemed to provide a portal to write about things that exceed or defy measurement or representation in language. Judging by the standing-room-only attendance and interactive question-answer period that followed, there were many of us seeking ways to articulate and validate a language that could effectively translate the experience of our unique research perspectives without compromising our experience, research, or language.

At the end of the twentieth century in Paris, Jacques Lecoq and prominent phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty were both engaging in their respective radical research processes on the body, yet not engaged in a dialogue themselves.<sup>25</sup> I left the conference thinking that I needed to focus the scope of what I am framing (*encadré*) as phenomenology.

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<sup>25</sup> I could not find any recorded encounters between the two. To offer some historical context toward the development of his pedagogy, it is important to consider the period in time when Lecoq first opened the doors to his School. Mid-way through the last century, France nurtured some of the greatest intellectual thinkers: Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault to name but a prominent few. Considering the fervency of the era, the Paris backdrop was one of literary, artistic, aesthetic decadence, in which Existentialism was all but *de rigueur*. Within the spirit of such radicalism arrives Lecoq. One could speculate that perhaps he was challenging theories that presented thought and speech as body-transcending activities (Murray, 2003). He was not alone either. Lecoq’s work was more in accordance with the theories of another, albeit more controversial, fellow Citizen Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In the next sections, I look at some alternate ways of encountering knowledge through the body beginning with the body as perceived by Merleau-Ponty himself.

## Phenomenological Triad of Expression

Later that June, after the conference, I created an independent reading course with my supervisor to explore Merleau-Ponty's most famous work, *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962).<sup>26</sup> The goal was to examine some of the original academic literature and philosophic discourses that investigate the body's capacities for learning. I sought a way to unite my own practical knowledge of the actor's body as a thinking instrument with that of scholarly ontological texts and debates in phenomenology specifically.<sup>27</sup>

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological body-being perspective offers one of the most apt scholarly forms to explain a knowing outside of the mind, similar to those of artistic theatre techniques. I titled my self-defined course "Being Body," and examined the body as site of conflict between sensing and knowing in spaces of learning and education. In particular, I began to draw from Merleau-Ponty's ontological perspective of the body as the vehicle for being-in-the-world, in order to examine the body/mind as integrated and mutually interactive systems. Phenomenology positions the body as the prevailing subject provided a way to think through Lecoq's applied techniques. For example, Merleau-Ponty writes about the body as the "power of natural expression" that converts certain motor "essences" into vocal form, while Lecoq claimed that an actors' voice *is* the body (Merleau-Ponty 2006 p.211; Lecoq, 2000). I began to grasp how Ponty and Lecoq both claimed the body to be the essential "expressive space" from which we

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<sup>26</sup> The 'essence' of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy challenged traditional mind to body theories by questioning the former's ontological positioning as epicenter of how we experience existence through the latter. By articulating these dichotomies, he engaged a densely philosophic vocabulary, further enriched by the grandiloquence of his native French language and its cherished precision with a play of words. I include this observation as it took much of the first section of his *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945/2002) to get a sense of his writing style—deciphering the salient points from their flowery elaborations. He believed that the Cartesian cogito was not the powerhouse subject, which conveniently oversees and objectifies the physiological *beingness* that is the body. He argued instead that a 'being-in-the-world' consisted of body-mind reciprocity. In this respect, they function as both subject and object where the body is not the subordinate (object) to how the (subject) mind perceives the world. It represents a 'being' in itself. His assertion radically stated that bodily experience presupposes that of the mind. This was in complete contrast to Descartes 'I think therefore I am' *cogito* which Merleau-Ponty believed detached the subject (consciousness) concluding that one cannot apprehend anything as existing unless one first experiences itself as existing in the act of apprehending thus – *I am* therefore I think. Quite simply he countered 'I see what I see' to Descartes "I think that I think that I think" (1968, p. 44).

<sup>27</sup> Other course reading resources included the aforementioned authors, Damasio, Gallagher, Johnson, Merleau-Ponty, McLaren, Shapiro, and Sheets-Johnstone.

perceive and mediate a ready-made world formed by representation (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 169; xiii; Lecoq 2000, p. 19).<sup>28</sup>

This emerging theoretical foundation of phenomenology could help translate the work of the theatrical actor, one who surrenders the body to an unknown creative process, a process emerging from both intuition (or, sensorial perceptions) and feeling (as in the bodily process of feeling one's feelings). In particular for me, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology dismisses the notion that the body is a collection of parts, parts that are separate from and/or subordinate to the psychological "me" of my mind, only revealed through "the extent of my nose end and the boundaries of my eye sockets" (p.105). According to Merleau-Ponty, the body acts as a physical reality where everything begins, ends, connects and integrates.

Drawn to Merleau-Ponty's view of the body as a first-order frontier to all that it meets outside (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), I found it resonated with the kinaesthetic consciousness I had experienced during my training at the Lecoq School. Merleau-Ponty also distinguishes a second order of expression, or "subject science," which awakens once it has passed through the first order body experience (p. ix). This subject science refers to the process of consciousness, or thought. Finally, verbal language, rooted in the first-order physical world, implicates the second-order subject science to form a "third-person phenomenon"—language (p. 203). At its simplest, I understood Merleau-Ponty's complex theory as a triad of human expression. Within the triad lay the two most pertinent features integral to actors' training—the body and the voice. In the space of the ELL classroom, a tension surfaces between the shared act of learning English and the distinct ethnic, racial, cultural, and linguistic differences that divide the students from each other.

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<sup>28</sup> Incidentally, fellow citizens, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jacques Lecoq were both 'practising' their alternatively radical visions on the body-being-in-the-world midway through the end of the last century in Paris, France.

For actors, the body and voice are their expression for Merleau-Ponty's being-in-the-world; in turn, the theoretical framework could help me address the role of the speaking body in the performance of spoken language in the English language-learning classroom. I began to see how this study would not pursue the verbal learning of English language so much as it would focus on the body as expression of, and for, speech. Both the body and verbal speech share living, breathing, and evolving aspects necessary for function and communication. Equally, verbal language and body language, originate as internal processes and/or impulses—the former as the external, audible, communicative system of thought, the latter motivated by mobility (Merleau-Ponty, 2006, p. 205).

By engaging in phenomenological research as the source or ground for my research, I encountered an underlying conflict—self-reflexive writing on the lived experience (Goble, 2011; van Manen, 1997/2007). Academic research-as-a-dissertation takes shape *as* writing, a discursive process that fixes movement into words. Words are formed and linguistically interpreted through a thinking process, where Arthur Bochner and Carolyn Ellis (2006) would argue, this, communicative act is both an expression of self and the cultural (p. 112).<sup>29</sup> As in my instance where, the additional (cognitive) step occurs by my further translating experience from my heritage language into English meaning. Thus, this research required a different type of writing than the autoethnographic, more embodied writing I discussed earlier that quilts together and drives narrative sequencing.

The body, and specifically my own embodied experience as a student training with Lecoq, was not one of thinking. Rather, we were our bodies, and engaged in the *play* of our bodies. We understood the body as our instrument in the realm of performance. The training engaged us in

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<sup>29</sup> Bochner and Ellis's article speaks to Communication as Autoethnography. They argue how "communicative acts always embody projections of the self however unconscious they may be." See Bochner and Ellis 2006, p. 112.

the experience, as prior to a conceptual, analytical or theoretical reflection of the body on that experience. The “thinking” we undertook was less cognitive or linguistic per se, but rather, a corporeal play to assist the practical executions of the physical.<sup>30</sup> This was a pre-reflective *doing* of *being* the body before *knowing* being in the body. In all our classwork with Lecoq, we analysed the body in practice. Even then, we knew that the (theatrical) frame of reference exceeded the everyday body that performed commonplace tasks.

In *Talking Minds: The Scholastic Construction of Incorporeal Discourse*, Maria Julia Carozzi (2005) writes how the lack of attention to body involvement in the act of writing contributes to understandings of the body as “something human that does not produce or perceive discourse” (p. 26). She argues that academic writing practices contribute to a construction of the body as that which does not conceive a discourse; rather, a discourse emerges as “the product of higher agents inhabiting the body but not belonging to it” (p. 29). Carozzi refers to these as “Cartesian bodies,” by which she means the discourse is an outer shell or “an instrument of expression or a vehicle for the real discursive being” (p. 36). Similarly, Anderson calls this writing style “Cartesian” in that it perpetuates object-subject split between the body-in-the-world and how we speak of the world, we inhabit (p. 2).

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1999) recognize that “human language and thought are structured by, and bound to, embodied experience” (p. 233). From a cognitive perspective, even writing has a degree of embodiment. For example, reading or writing the word “grasp” stimulates the neural network of the motor system that fires when we physically grasp an object (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; Kemp, 2012). At the Lecoq School, we learned words function as living organisms that depend on the exploration of the body to express them (Lecoq 2000, p. 49). Our

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<sup>30</sup> Certainly, cognition incorporates a corporeal/sensing process as well as mental processing which is what I mean by ‘thinking’. To address what may appear as a misrepresentation of distortion of Lecoq’s work, I would like to emphasize that looking beyond its completely practical aspect—understood only *through* practice—the dichotomous mind-body framework that underlies his School has been debated since the time of Aristotle.

training focuses on the body as the poetic instrument through which expressions of writing, speaking, and being uniquely flow. I discuss this at greater length in the Chapter 3, an autoethnographic analysis chapter on Lecoq.

Compelled by Carozzi's work, I began to break down components of my applied Lecoquian body experience, looking for a way to capture it in writing. I immediately encountered several challenges. First, having an embodied experience and reflecting on that experience cannot occur at the same time. The former is necessary for the latter to occur, so one abrogates the other (van Manen, 1990, p. 9). Second, this paradox: the "arms-legs outer world contact" of kinaesthetic sensation, which supplies and feeds the interpreting mind, also becomes the source that supersedes it (Arnheim, 1954/1974, p. 405). Third, I could only write a personal, reflective account of my time at the Lecoq School to the extent that, I could describe the physiological experience, albeit limiting the experience to the parameters of words as language.

In terms of this last challenge, the subjective art form and practice of my Lecoq experience became problematic as a writing process. In the context of retelling my body in experience, I had to create another (reflective) body, different from the original source of my Lecoq training. I had to learn a different, scholarly alternate of my Lecoquian body source in order to speak about it. Moreover, I needed to reconcile how my very attempts to theorize Lecoq's teachings out of their original context counteract the core of the teaching's origins. Therefore, phenomenology afforded me a theoretical framework to hypothesize a discourse about inhabiting the body and language learning, yet, as I learned at that original symposium, it was a framework that generated more questions than it could answer or resolve.

## Lifeworld, Lived Experience, Sense Experience

To help articulate the notion of me embodying research and body experience as the applied practice for my two field studies, I now turn to how three fundamental concepts of phenomenology—lifeworld, lived experience, and sense experience—apply to my own research. It is Van Manen's (1990) claim that lived experience begins and ends within the parameters of phenomenological research. Each of these critical perspectives can help narrate individual embodied experiences (p. 36). In particular, these three concepts offer a language for identifying the methods for students in ELL classrooms to reflect upon their own personal experience—a necessary element for my revisioning of the body in English language learning curricula (Medina, 2006). For this reason, I explore each one briefly below.

### *Lifeworld*

I begin with the lifeworld as it encompasses the ground of our experience (van Manen, 1990).<sup>31</sup> Essentially, lifeworld is our way of *being* in a given moment, how we are oriented to the world in a particular way due to our embodied realities as historical, cultured, gendered beings. A highly complex theory due to perpetual fluctuations, the lifeworld relates to fundamental experience, or, more simply stated, how each of us engages in our world. It is decidedly not the consciousness or our specific relation to the world (intentionality). Rather, it is what our consciousness actively experiences *because* of our intentionality.

For example, in the case of my studies, my orientation to the lifeworld is that of an artist-educator, a doctoral-student, and researcher. Concerning my In-class field research, the lifeworld

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<sup>31</sup> This description of lifeworld is borrowed from Max Van Manen interpretation based on 20<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Edmund Husserl's concept of 'Lebenswelt' described as "the world of immediate experience...already there...pregiven". See Husserl, 1970. Derivatives of the *lifeworld* concept appear in critical and anti-oppression pedagogies, sociology, learning and development theories, as well as theatre training technique (McLaren, 1998; Freire, 1970; Bourdieu, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978; Stanislavski, 1936; Grotowski, 1995; Lecoq, 2000).

(new environment) of the newcomer subject relates to the influential conditions he or she encounters there. In designing the In-class study, I wanted to ensure that the level of students' interaction and engagement was significantly different from what they customarily experienced in a language-learning classroom.

Van Manen (2007) broaches lifeworld through hermeneutic phenomenological research of the lived experience, where he advises, "the best way to enter a person's lifeworld is to participate in it" (p. 69). In keeping with the intention of my research, this consisted of intersecting Lecoq's alternative theory and methodology to the newcomer students' settlement and integration experience in mainstream education (Davis and Sumara, 2008, p.33).

### *Lived Experience*

What the In-class study I designed seeks to show is how the body in experience offers newcomer students an opening awareness and exploration of English, language, and the self in English language, as propelled by movement. This differentiates lived experience from what van Manen refers to as lived meaning<sup>32</sup> of experience, which is "soaked through language" (van Manen, 1990, p. 38). Similar to the contradictions found in movement epistemology of the Neutral Mask, van Manen delineates between the epistemology of experience, the epistemology of language, and the text/words (e.g., the hermeneutics and/or situated interpretations) in and of the experience (1990, p. 38). He writes that "the epistemology of experience and perception has been moved over somewhat to make space for an epistemology of language and text" (p. 38).

This view corresponds to my experience of training at the Lecoq School. There, as first year students in the journey from the silent to the spoken word, we learned about the art of

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<sup>32</sup> "Lived meaning refers to the way that a person experiences and understands his or her world as real and meaningful...those aspects of a situation as experienced by the person in it". See van Manen, 1990, p. 183.

listening as a method to sense, and we used this method when all that could be communicated without words had arrived and *la parole* (words) were necessary to continue. Founded on Lecoq's pedagogy, words function as living organisms dependent on the exploration of the body of words to express them (Lecoq, 2000, p. 49 original italic). An alternative view of language activated by sensorimotor processes allow newcomer students to explore the experience of *being* in English language as a way to assist in the lived meanings made in their settlement (Louwerse and Connell, 2010). From a phenomenological perspective, lived experience is comparable to the artistic endeavour in that it is "a creative attempt to somehow capture a certain phenomenon of life" and replicate it through language and senses (van Manen, 1990, p. 39). For instance, in a theatrical performance the stage actor's recreated movements of a character on stage require physical motivation in order to express intention. Of course, this is a fictitious, symbolic example, but its purpose—in the biological sense of motility—is necessary for audience's comprehension of the experience. Left as abstract movement or as internalized thought, the intention behind the stage actors' experiences remains ambiguous.

Lecoq upheld that the discovery of new physical circuits established though new movement patterns helped critically shape how we understand (Lecoq, 2000, p. 54). I use this model as a way to encourage students to experience language through the movement of their bodies and as an act informed by auditory, olfactory-gustatory, visual-haptic senses (Louwerse and Connell, 2010). Here, movement and gesture shape proprioceptive<sup>33</sup> awareness as unconscious motivation to motor activity for language learning (Gallagher, 2005).

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<sup>33</sup> "Proprioception is the bodily sense that allows us to know how our body and limbs are positioned." See Gallagher 2005, p. 43.

### *Sense Experience*

Phenomenology investigates the lived experience (essence) through sense or the senses, a play on words from the French *sens* which, similar to the English definition, implies both the organism's physiological capacity to gather and provide data for perception, as well as the making of meaning—a correlation to consciousness (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. vii). Merleau-Ponty defines physiological sensation as those felt; "I feel," as opposed to the psychological meaning of sense of "I think that I feel." What separates the two is the actual experience of sensation versus the reflective interpretation of sensation, as he defines it here:

Psychology and physiology are no longer, then, two parallel sciences, but two accounts of behaviour, the first concrete, the second abstract.<sup>34</sup> [...] The physiologist for his part has to rid himself of the realistic prejudice, which all sciences borrow from common sense, and which hampers them in their development [...] the scientist too must learn to criticize the idea of an external world in itself, since the facts themselves prompt him to abandon that of the body as a transmitter of messages. (p.11)

By Merleau-Ponty's account, phenomenology actually precedes what he terms the "facticity" of visual data and psychological meaning, functioning instead as the "study of the *advent* of being to consciousness" (p. 71 original italics). Merleau-Ponty tells us that in the phenomenal field, the world is "already there," even before reflection and our situated experience of it begins (p. vii). He argues that through innate knowingness of "sense experience" (*le sentir* in the original French), we take in knowledge needed for perception through the body engaged in the active<sup>35</sup> experience of living. Subsequently Merleau-Ponty claimed that scientific consciousness then "borrows" its models from "structures of living experience" and appropriates

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<sup>34</sup> Merleau-Ponty expanding upon this concept he first wrote about in one of his earlier works called *La Structure du Comportement* (1942).

<sup>35</sup> MP's use of the word 'active' over that of a 'dead' quality: "A wooden wheel placed on the ground is not, *for sight*, the same thing as a wheel bearing a load" i.e. the wheel in activity or the activity that allows the wheel to be activated (p.60).

them in the forming of “common” sense (p.68). In other words, no amount of sense experience occurs—verbal or nonverbal—if there is not some modicum of commonality, as in a shared understanding of experience (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p. 381). Therefore, more than merely a figure of a “conductor” telegraphing information, it is that *with* which the body functions (not *by* which). Messages are “apprehended *with* the senses” and relayed to our *beingness* in experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 11).

### **Body Literature: A Review**

My training in physical theatre performance at the Lecoq School was, without a doubt, the origin where I first took interest in the body as an object of study. Lecoq’s exploration of the pre-reflective body in movement is the dimension of bodywork I seek to engage in a mainstream pedagogical practice. My research has provided a scholarly vocabulary by which to approach conceptualizations of embodiment, embodied learning, embodied knowing, body knowledge, and all other in-body/embodied variations as an alternate way to describe how we “be” in our bodies. More specifically, I learned to contextualize a body-in-learning through the lenses of critical pedagogy and concepts drawn from sociology and anthropology and articulated below as a means to interpret and identify the body in the language of theory.

### **Habitus and Physical Capital**

The concept of *habitus* has been applied and defined in varying degrees as body techniques (Mauss); *habitualität* or habits (Husserl); the lived body (Merleau-Ponty); and perhaps most

commonly, Pierre Bourdieu has modernized *habitus*<sup>36</sup> (1973). The (Latin) *habitus*, translated from its original Aristotelian (Greek) pronunciation *hexis* (state), was originally used to describe “the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them” (Wacquant 2005, p. 316, cited in Navarro 2006, p.16).

I imagine *habitus* as a set of patterns, or inclinations that predispose members of a social group to interact in ways consistent with social norms (characteristics, behaviour, expectations, and sensibilities) that are either determined or bestowed upon them. *Habitus* arises through a social rather than an individual process. It is neither of ones choosing, nor at the mercy of the structures that develop and define it; it exists, rather, in the interrelationship between the two (Shilling 2003, p. 111).

Traditionally Bourdieu’s speaks of *habitus* in the sense of a schematic<sup>37</sup> structure of the mind, created “without any deliberate pursuit of coherence [...] without any conscious concentration” (Bourdieu, 1984, p.170). However, this does not preclude bodily influences to the habitus. Bourdieu may address *habitus* through an economic paradigm, but he also speaks to the influences of cultural, social, and symbolic capital, reflected in our living cultural, social and physical environments. This use of capital lies in the sense of ascertaining value, a contribution to the larger social fabric that implicate domination, hierarchy, and the acquisition of power. These undeniable factors “provide individuals with class-dependent, predisposed ways of

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<sup>36</sup> Influenced by his predecessor’s, Bourdieu defines habitus through the notion of ‘capital’, a social stratification of theories that examine the power relations of social life. Bourdieu exploits ‘capital’ through cultural, social, economic, and symbolic frameworks, from which resides the habitus. See Bourdieu, 1973.

<sup>37</sup> Schema, defined in the traditional sense, is the way in which we make meaning to understand a situation through frameworks, scripts, ideas, and so forth (Rumelhart, 1980; Schank and Abelson, 1977). Quite simply it is the basis of how we individually organize what it is we know and how we have come to know it. Thus, as a ‘generalized knowledge structure’, schemata is typically viewed as a cognitive function, dating as far back as Kant’s comprehension of it as an organization of memory and imagination, into related groups that determine how we behave in familiar situations (Critique of Pure Reason).

categorizing and relating to familiar and novel situations”—and thus the commoditized net worth of social groups are identified and identifiable to others (Shilling, 2003, p. 113).

Chris Shilling (2003), writing on the “unfinishedness” of Bourdieu’s body theories, extends the interrelationship between a person’s physical being and social location (p.12). Unlike Bourdieu, he is not so much concerned with the commodified social *habitus* of physical power status, such as the “body as bearer of value”, but more with it as the biological fleshy-functions as evolving critical social agents of change (Shilling, 2008). Shilling claims that every enacted way in which people “be” in their bodies is result of social systems of education, language, judgments, values, and more, all of which influences the body (p. 112; Bourdieu, 1986). As basic structures of culture, they are visible definitions of social class and thus, social formation, imprinted on and embodied in our physical being. Thus, bodies “as bearers of symbolic value” are organisms in perpetual development, affected by social influences, location, and forces at play, become a form of physical capital (Shilling, 2003, p. 111; Damasio, 1999). Societally influenced cultural schemas develop out of a collective groups experience as they acquire similar forms of expression in the shared environment.

I interpret Shilling’s work as the body extending beyond the theorized contexts that influence, form, and orient it. Instead, he focuses on the ways in which the body can convert its symbolic-identifications into other resources. Shilling argues three factors unavoidably affect the body: 1) social formation 2) social location, and what he calls, 3) “taste” (p. 113). To define his latter concept of “taste,” I see him arguing that personal variables exist beyond both *how* the body is formed and *where* it is socially located; “taste” resides in the substance from which to mobilize *habitus* theory through the body. Shilling argues taste is “the processes whereby

individuals appropriate voluntary choices and preferences”; bodies develop through their interrelations between the social location and taste (p. 113).

Of these processes, taste is not regarded solely or necessarily as conscious manifestations. On that account, perhaps the word ‘taste’ conjures references to gustatory perceptions, but is not immune to attempts to allocate to several other facets of ‘being-in-the-world’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). For instance, this includes the particular ways in which we choose to move and orient movement in relation to culture, gender, or even relate, and are in relation to, others. As another example, my cultural identifications of Nicolina, Nicole, and Nikki both influence and dictate movement of how I know to “be” in my body. I connect Shilling’s social theory concept of taste to the visceral dimensions examined by neuroscientists Antonio Damasio (1994) and Mark Johnson (2007). For them, taste relates to physical embodied orientations, founded or formed by the feeling-body contained within the organisms’ storehouse of experiential knowledge—a perceptual schema that moves the concept away from its association with aesthetics and instead embraces it as an integration of a matrix of soma experiences (Damasio, 1994).

If the *habitus* are dispositions that incline agents to behave in a specific manner, how do the practices of another language and its cultural ethos imbalance the social norms of the group’s origins? Specifically, how does the dominance of English and its social class *puissance* determine attitudes and perceptions in the way of projected dispositions on the body are imposed and/or re/negotiated? Before I can explore these questions in depth, I want to highlight some of the work in critical pedagogy, shaped in sociological theory, first.

## Social Reproduction and the Body

According to Peter McLaren (1998), the social structures and processes that categorize groups of people according to familiar predispositions are also responsible for their social and cultural reproduction. Leading scholars of critical pedagogy, philosophy, sociology and anthropology have exposed how the reproduction of social class maintains characteristics that keep the dominant social group dominant, largely by ensuring the ongoing subordination of social group (McLaren, 1998, p. 189; Giroux, 1985; Freire, 2009; Carozzi, 2005). The position of school and schooling practices contribute to the reproduction of dominant and subordinate groups in society and social structures.

Particularly critical to my concerns about language learning as the predominant method of integration in education can be seen through McLaren's pivotal question, "How are students' subjectivities and social identities produced discursively by institutionalized power?" (1998, p. 191). In the context of my study, I would add this question gains relevance especially when learning the dominant language of the institutionalized group in power. To what degree is the dominant institution influencing minority groups and minority identities, compelling them to comply with the ways of school and/or culture? Recalling Carozzi's scholastic habitus, are social formations both "inscribed" into the flesh, and separated from the flesh through "discourse-producing" subjectivities and social identities that separate body and word (McLaren, 1998, p.191; Carozzi, 2005, p. 28)? Is this symptomatic of what Paolo Freire (1970) declared to be a sickness of narration in education, or the "banking" of new knowledge at the expense of students' individual ways of interpreting their world (Freire, 1970/2009, p. 71; Medina, 2006, p. 22)?

In other words, if the English language acts as a communicative application, the unifying agent necessary to benefit new-to-English language students, then what amount of learning occurs about their symbolic bodies of difference. To what degree does linguistic practice influence cultural parameters that potentially misinform and/or *dis-embody*, as in to distance the body away or apart, from teaching and learning practices for the new language?<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, what is the unintentional message being reinforced by education when the successful recognition of the newcomer body is assessed and evaluated by their progress of, and into, the dominant social language (Carozzi, 2005; McLaren, 1998)?

### **Analogizing the Body as “Home”**

All of the above questions haunt and inform my work. Antonio Damasio’s (1999) analogical use of the body as a home profoundly resonates with the discord I felt as a young person, discord between my own body and sense of being with what Damasio calls a series of “extending values”—such as a system of language—that fill it.<sup>39</sup>

Damasio explains how a *new* home that is similar in shape to the one of our childhood can make us feel at home but unwelcome at the same time (Damasio, 1999, p. 57 *italics added*). Applying this to my language struggles as a child, the new home symbolizes the body that houses the new language yet simultaneously resides within the original home in the “theatre of the body” (p. 8). Stated otherwise, when my body-of-culture met and acquired the learning of the dominant language, this new home, replete with extending values of its own, did not necessarily merge and translate into a singular experience of one (home). Consequently, each home as separate spaces—one inside the shape of the other—created an estranged bodily *othering* of self to self.

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<sup>38</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson identify disembodiment as conceptual aspects that remain “contents of mind” yet “not crucially shaped or given any significant inferential content by the body.” See Lakoff and Johnson 1999, p. 37.

<sup>39</sup> Damasio’s original quote, ‘extending values’ pertain to “emotional machinery”. I am merely borrowing the analogy. See Damasio 1999, p.57.

Lecoq's pedagogy correlates with Damasio's sense of self. Broadly speaking, Damasio identifies "*core consciousness*" as a simple biological phenomenon of conscious activity (Damasio, 1999). A narrow scope of consciousness, the concept identifies how the here and now of the present self saliently placed in a spatial and temporal context (p. 169). Beyond core consciousness, lays a more complex kind of consciousness known as "*extended consciousness*," which unlike core consciousness is able to organize several levels of stored information, filed and recorded across time (p.16 original italics). The quality of extension refers to the capacity to expand according to age and growth accumulation. Each consciousness corresponds with two aspects of the self. Core self, emerging from core consciousness, retains the steadfast essence of being; the self of the extended consciousness, however, is more pertinent to my research.

This extended self needs consistencies, provided via the collection of facts and a system of memories, i.e. aspects that make up our distinct identities. Damasio describes this aspect of self as the "*autobiographical self*" (p. 17). As the first half of the word autobiography suggests – *auto* means self, and *bio* refers to one's life. These invariant identifications help us make meaning of our self/life, such as place of birth, date of birth, family name and so forth. The second half of the word, *graphos*, refers to the storied or written nature of memory and identity. We are not only collections of facts, but also of stories, whose narratives are processes of creation as much as they are of collection.<sup>40</sup> As knowledge characteristics, these elements are both extraneous and integral sources from which we identify self for others as much as for ourselves.

As Franc Chamberlain and Ralph Yarrow (2002) observe:

The self that thinks and acts needs firstly to retire from the constructions put upon it by the language of others and then to create itself through tactile exploration, observation and discovery, and finally in the company of other similarly questing selves. (p.12)

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<sup>40</sup> Of note: Damasio's concept of 'autobiographical self' resonates with Lecoq's 'journey' into the poetic body of chapter 2.

I contextualize this self—removed from language constructions of identifications, as the *pre-autobiographical* self in the realm of the phenomenal field. Neither an actual space nor an imagined place, but rather, a transitional space (and counter to the world of consciousness), phenomenology positions this space of the physical body as the frontier to *being-in-the-world* of all that it meets outside of its borders (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. ix). Phenomenology is of the particular point of view (perception) that lived experienced precedes the signs and symbols that science has deciphered, and on which we rely for the making of meaning. Here, Merleau-Ponty argues that the body takes in knowledge (phenomena) through an innate knowingness of sense experience (*le sentir*),<sup>41</sup> while actively engaged in the experience of living (p. 60). As remedy, he proposes a return to the first-order expression, or sensing, of our basic experiences of the world by empirically uniting an individual particular perspective, i.e., those initially felt and lived (“I feel” rather than the “I *think* that I feel”). By Merleau-Ponty’s account, phenomenology actually precedes what he terms the facticity of visual data and psychological meaning, thus functioning instead as the “study of the *advent* of being to consciousness” (p. 71). This allows the body the ability to *be* a “preconscious” experience, in a nothingness of knowledge, which then goes on to be processed through speech as expressions—or one could argue representations at the intersection of self and culture (p. 92; Bochner and Ellis 2006, p. 113).<sup>42</sup>

## The Body in the Space of ELL

Neither the Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological body nor Damasio’s neuroscientific body are the body perspectives discussed in relation to mainstream education. Consequently, they are

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<sup>41</sup> Merleau-Ponty defines physiological sensation, playing with the French definitions of sense from the French *sentir* meaning to hear, and *les sensations sensibles*, or the sensitivity of sensations -- those that are felt ('I feel'). In contrast, the psychological is the determinate world where sensations are an element of consciousness, or the thinking of feeling. See Merleau-Ponty, 1962.

<sup>42</sup> Merleau-Ponty referred to the basic experience of the world as the first-order experience whereas scientific interpretation filters experience through a second-order expression.

not bodies teen-age students typically identify with—as their bodies. Those are more along the lines of the bodies they drag out of bed, dress for school, walk and run to class, follow or defy instruction and generally *move*. Furthermore, within most curricula, traditional teaching practices on the body include science class (e.g., topics in anatomy, skeletons, organs etc.) or issues discussed in health class (e.g., body issues, puberty, and reproduction). In some instances, the body is covered in religious studies, with abstinence and evolution, or it is mobilized through physical education, dance and drama classes. These bodies, reinforced through theories of the habitus, capital, and social reproduction body views, continue to re-present bodies as objects of the subject mind.

Writing on the “The Rise—and Rise—of the Body in Contemporary Culture” (2003), Simon Murray intersects sociological and cultural studies with theatre/performance studies. He offers an alternative perspective in an effort to provide a subject-position for the body:

The human body is not a fixed biological, anatomical or “god-given” entity. Rather, the body carries the traces of its own history – it ‘speaks’ of who we are. When we look at bodies—including our own—we see more than just flesh, hair, blood, muscles and so on. We see personal biography, the masks of suffering or happiness, and the imprint of class, gender, race and all those other characteristics and dispositions that make us who we are.

(Murray, 2003, 39)

In our socially dynamic ELL classrooms, the three-dimensional body is magnified as the visible, embodied reality of physical flesh is also, the primary, boundary crossing of difference. As a social space, school naturally functions in accordance with needs and activities directed toward coexistence. This is by no means a revelatory statement as scholars who have thoroughly examined concepts of schooling’s history, issues of teaching and learning, and critical

pedagogical analyses on the foundations of education and life in schools and so forth, have demonstrated (Axelrod, 1997; Britzman, 2003; McLaren, 1998). Peter McLaren (1998), for example, offers: “We do not stand before the social world; we live *in the midst of it*. As we seek the meaning of events we seek the meaning of the social” (p.174 original italics).

With a view of the ELL classroom as a social microcosm of the school/education macrocosm, I inform my research through McLaren’s statement and the necessity of exploring shared experience of the common world. Yet my interest on the classroom space veers from this broader perspective on schooling and revisions the ELL classroom precisely because of education’s emphasis on the development of commonly shared world perspectives—in the shared space. Any experience of socialization begins with a complex self, and I believe school can play an integral role in assisting students to understand self through their personal biographies and innate knowingness of sensorial experience. Contributing to discourse on the politicized body, the literature suggests that ELL education can be a potential site for critical inquiry into the biological, genetic, physical structure of the body as self *in* and *for* the new culture. I am keenly interested in how the development of “extending values” are acquired and required in the new (figurative and literal) home of the dominant culture may serve to distance newcomer students not only from one another (racial/cultural hierarchies), but also from their own selves (Damasio 1999, p. 58).

The traditional school system acts as a social institution and pathway to gain comprehension of the new culture. The open-door policy shared by many principals, schools, and boards results in these people shouldering the weight of a great many issues outside what their roles are set up to do and provide. The truth of the matter is that schools, and specifically the socially dynamic English language-learning classroom, can provide opportunities to enhance

newcomers' understanding of various aspects of integration. Canada imagines itself as a place where social difference and identity formation is encouraged. Yet, my study questions whether language-based identity is a focus that unites or divides the co-existing diversities in our schools.<sup>43</sup> This raises several difficulties about the role of schooling for students new to Canada. Do we begin to create substitute schools that meet the immediate needs of the individual student-body demographic, say as in the Africentric model? Do we follow what smaller, predominantly homogenous, cultures such as Italy and its schooling system, which engages language immersion methods of "teaching foreign minors"?<sup>44</sup> Clearly, no schooling is not the answer, but is 'boutique' schooling the better approach?

### **English Acquisition: Marker of Success**

To begin to answer these questions about ELL options, I draw from three provincial English language learning (ELL) documents<sup>45</sup> that each speak to a cross section of new language learner issues (ELL curricula, supplemental ELL programming and newcomer student services). I consider a common viewpoint found in each that advocates English language acquisition as key for the "personal success" of new-to-Canada students and their social integration (Ministry of Education, 2007, p.7). In varying degrees, the consensual marker of success appears to be expressed through English-language strategies that enhance learners' participation, productiveness, and responsibility as future citizens in "Ontario society" (Many Roots, Many

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<sup>43</sup> "Diversity is a term whose meaning varies with the background, concerns, theoretical framework, and context in which it is discussed...For the purposes of this chapter, it means recognition of variation among people related to their cultural heritages, racial and ethnic identities, and gender and class experiences." See Arvizu, 1994. pp. 75-97.

<sup>44</sup>In Italy, 'teaching foreign minors' is a term given to: "minors born in Italy to an immigrant couple; immigrant children arrived in Italy before schooling age; newly arrived immigrant adolescents; unaccompanied minors) and minority children such as the Roma, for fostering the educational and social inclusion." Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/inclusion/italy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/inclusion/italy_en.pdf) (March 27, 2013)

<sup>45</sup> Ministry of Education Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 to 12: English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development (2007); English Language Learners ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2007), Many Roots Many Voices (2005).

Voices, 2005; Ministry of Education, 2007; The Ontario Curriculum: English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 2007).

Given the hierarchical compartmentalizing of my own language experience and struggles, I find this model for success troubling. Particularly the varied ways it is alluded to through usage of equally victory-oriented words such as ‘effective’, ‘attain’, ‘outcome’, ‘achieve’, ‘excel’ in their syntactically correct suffixes and the portrayal of success as something approvingly earned or merit worthy (McLaren, 1984/1989, p. 171). I feel there is something assumed in the way of understanding or intention by these Ministry of Education documents that risk projecting a double meaning given the context of the disadvantaged language learner. Although virtuous, I found there was also something oppressive about them too.

For example, in *English Language Learners Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (2007), the table of contents is a well laid out, two-part, brochure-like guide that offers an array of new-to-Canada explanations defining the English-language learner and the parameters of her or his learning. The document speaks to the reception and orientation extended to students and their families, as well as classroom essentials in the way of ongoing placement, assessment and evaluation.

As I made my way through the document, I began to notice potential paradoxes within the proposed ELL programming. In theory, the language contained within the Policies and Procedures allocates productive language-acquisition strategies, but I could not help but wonder how they might *dislocate* (the student) when put into practice. I sensed a double-edged sword in the ‘how-to/what-to-expect’ organization of the table-of-contents of the provincial document. I set out to try to understand what troubled me about the language of the written information. I questioned how the documents assumed the neatly laid-out written words would translate into

equally, orderly, physical encounters in the classroom. On the one hand, the documents attend to inequities due to prior English-language learning or a lack thereof among new-to-Canada students. On the other hand, however, they could equally contribute to, or, rather, exacerbate them by reinforcing learning difficulties—not to mention, social positioning.

Naturally, the goals of all three documents are in the best interest of the learners' care and well-being. Without a doubt, considerable effort and good will went into the planning and preparation of these documents. There is no question that the expectations outlined in each are commendable and function as welcoming strategies acknowledging difference in our classrooms. These take on an alternative form as presentations in respect to antiracism, Heritage languages program, Flag Day celebrations, and an overall sensitivity to implementing anti-discrimination principles (The Ontario Curriculum: English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 2007, p. 51). Their intentions appear to be for the genuine betterment of new language learners' integration and prosperity in Ontario.

My concern is how the language and inclusive strategies touted for helping new-to-English-language students integrate into mainstream classrooms. Given that the bulk of the curriculum is geared towards “successful” learning practices, I could not help but wonder about a place or space where a student would be allowed to fail, for experiences of failure as much as success in ELL are crucial to language acquisition.

I raise the notion of failure because of Lecoq's reliance on the generative powers of mistakes—to fail is inevitable and confirms his “pedagogy of risk.” He advocated for the importance of failure and mistakes in the form of faults, incorrectness, wrongness, and all other blunders of error. He believed “error is not just acceptable, it is necessary for continuation ...without error, there is no movement. Death follows” (Lecoq, 2000, pp. 20-21). The symbolic

use of death in this context relates to stagnation, alluding to a lack of agency in the learning. French writer and teacher Christophe Merlant (2004) who chronicled Lecoq's work for over 20 years and observed that the “management of the unpredictable, which is based on a scrupulous preparation, ensures that the teaching is not a process of simple transmission of knowledge, but a space of astonishment at shared discovery” (pp. 68-69). At the Lecoq School, members of the teaching faculty encourage students to risk failure, which—and I speak from personal experience—when put into practice, is actually harder to do than might be expected.

This notion of failing and failure made me think about the learning trajectory of my own extended formal education, where the concept of failure was inconceivable. I believe this is largely due to perceptions about education, schools, and learning as places of achievement, success and betterment, an attitude clearly exemplified through the rhetoric of the Ministry documents. In standardized learning practices, the system, mediated through curriculum, is hard-wired to promote success—and “successful learners are those whom schools reward” (McLaren, 1998, p. 167). Society typically regards failings, or failure as misfortune or a loss, a sign of weakness or default. Failure is often viewed in relation to something, or in contention with, such as the educational performance of failing schools, issues of gender and achievement *vis-à-vis* “failing” boys, the socio-economic student demographic, or failing to meet the needs of students with disabilities in a system predominantly set-up for the able-bodied (Elmore, 2004; Epstein and Elwood, 1998; Titchosky, 2000). At the Lecoq School, the act of failing did not end at the failing. On the contrary, to fail at being successful, actually encouraged the pursuit of the learning possibility. The emphasis on success in the literature means there is little room for the newcomer student, already disadvantaged by their limited English proficiency, to be encouraged

to fail in order to learn. For this reason, I next turn to examining what is not working in current practice, and how we may better help expand areas of youth settlement integration in education.

### **Socio-Politics in the Classroom**

“Language development is central to students’ intellectual, social, cultural, and emotional growth and must be seen as a key component of the curriculum...Language is the basis for thinking, communicating, learning, and viewing the world.”<sup>46</sup> With this statement, Ontario’s Ministry of Education sets the stage for the integration of language into the everyday socio-politics of the classroom, so that English acquisition and proficiency become the obvious determinant of academic achievement and student success. McLaren’s (1998) critical pedagogy perspectives on the social and political characteristics of schools and schooling offers a context from which to consider the unintentional aspects of learning that are motivated by good intentions. He expands upon this approach in respect to the “*secondary effects*”<sup>47</sup> of minority students who are challenged by these embedded notions of academic achievement-as-success. Secondary effects are another way of saying alternative consequences to the intended outcomes in schooling processes—commonly referred to in education as the hidden curriculum (p. 186).<sup>48</sup> The hidden curriculum is an unforeseeable exchange in the teaching/learning relationship between the explicit information (e.g., textbooks, rubrics, course outlines, classroom discussions, curricula and so forth) and how these sources are received and subsequently embodied within social class structures of the student body.

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<sup>46</sup> See Ministry of Education, The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 and 10 English, pp. 9-10.

<sup>47</sup> McLaren quoting Boudon’s ‘secondary effects’: “the differences in students’ cultural capital and the social practices lived out within various cultural fields of experience”. See McLaren page 210, original italics.

<sup>48</sup> McLaren did not coin the term ‘hidden curriculum’ yet does acknowledge the works of other scholars and critical theorists throughout his book, notably Henry Giroux.

Freire's (2009) banking concept of education identifies this as students "storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world" (p.73). In planning my ELL classroom study, as I discuss later in more depth, I take into consideration some of the measures needed to help newcomers integrate, as gestures made to assist in their settlement can have a way of reinforcing values, beliefs, and perspectives of the dominant culture.

McLaren writes how "structurally located and culturally mediated" failures are inherent struggles that reflect more the things that aren't working in schools rather than individual unsuccessful, underachievement's "deficiencies" of the lone student (p. 210). This view applies well to the way in which Ontario's provincial ELL documents measure the newcomers' successful language integration and McLaren's model of student failure. With regards to the new-to-Canada, non-English-speaking student, there is an inherently contradictory element in how language learning is traditionally being taught that—perhaps unavoidably—may harm rather than help newcomer students integrate. The teaching practices for new-to-Canada youth do not exemplify a Freirian banking model of education typified in the phrase "this is how we do it here" (Freire, 2009, p. 72). Yet social inequities cannot be overlooked when students are caught in the crossfire between fundamental difficulties in learning discrepancies, the range of students' classroom needs (their prior learning experience, varied learning level assessments, and issues of acculturation) in the face of curricula adherence, teacher expectancy outcomes, and class and semester time-line requirements.

Global migration is the new norm and with it, Ontario schools not only must navigate racial, cultural, linguistic diversity, but also, as Helen Harper (1997) claims, they must "confront gender, racial and economic disparity and discrimination," all of which come with global

migrants (p 192). Education has worked to implement welcoming strategies for diversity into our schools, so too has it welcomed a presence of cultural politics. McLaren argues that knowledge separates social classes into dominant and subordinate parent cultures, where “[g]roups who live out social relations in subordination to the dominant culture are part of the ‘*subordinate culture*’” (1998, pp. 175-176, original italics). He borrows this concept of cultural hierarchy from Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) and Gramsci’s discussion of hegemony. Hegemony defines the influential predominance of one social class over that of another. However, the lines of affluence are less visible and defined today than when Gramsci was writing in the early twentieth century (Ives, 2004).<sup>49</sup> Some may argue it is worse now, given the growing income inequity and more strongly concentrated wealth in an ever-shrinking group that erodes a middle class. An imbalance exists between the speed and progression of globalizing cities/citizens and the corresponding methods in which our language-learning classrooms remain stuck in social frames that continue to define newcomer students by virtue of their lack of the dominant narrative (Freire, 2009, p. 71).<sup>50</sup>

McLaren furthers the dominant/subordinate bifurcation of cultures by introducing subcultures comprised of varying subsets of the binary (p. 176). He presents a hierarchical splintering of peoples into groupings of privilege, albeit on a smaller scale. In my experience working with newcomer students in our mainstream schools, acquiring or possessing the English language is a significant contributor to the politics of the non-English language speaking students and their social positioning. This renders schooling and ELL classrooms difficult spaces of learning; they serve as a necessary part of the language integration process, yet as McLaren

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<sup>49</sup> Peter Ives comprehensive book on *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci* outlines the pervasiveness of his hegemonic concept. Originally intended to reflect the predominance of one ruling nation over another, hegemony has since been used in a variety of contexts, including “literature, education, film...cultural studies...political science, history and international relations.” See Ives, 2004, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> Saskia Sassen’s work on *The Global City* defines our interconnectedness as peoples largely due to “the ascendancy of information technologies and the associated increase in the mobility and liquidity of capital...In the case of global cities, the dynamics and processes that get territorialized are global.” See Sassen, 2005.

argues, they are also in *opposition* to the predominant white social identity acceptance (p. 202 original italics). New-to-Canada English-language learners naturally form pockets of peer groups who share the same cultural or language origins: Hispanophone students, students of South Asia, Mainland China and so forth. In relation to the dominant language currency, the newcomer students' language of origin continues to define their difference. I consider the dilemma McLaren addresses in respect to the "identity system," which he claims black students have formed due to the racialized colour of their skin and, generally, the language inequities they faced (p. 202). McLaren argues that skin colour continues to sustain the politics and reproduction of social class relations in schools, to the process of language integration. As I turn to Lecoq's pedagogy in the next chapters, I will also consider how the Neutral Mask may offer ways to rethink this deeply embedded identity system.

The hidden curriculum and hegemony take shape as contemporary versions of historical vestiges—the colonizer and colonized continue to function within teaching/learning frameworks (Macedo, 1987). Yet, as McLaren asserts, it is not the intent of the learning, nor are recipients knowingly participants in the partaking and perseveration of their own oppression:

Hegemony gives birth to itself somewhere 'between' the contradictory axes of a structural domination and the self-production of subordinate groups. At the ideological level, it is embedded in a welter of contradictions. (McLaren, 1999, p.208)

McLaren outlines a series of dominant/subordinate examples realized as exchanges in Freire's model, in which the teacher teaches and the students are there for the teaching (Freire, 1970/2009). There is reciprocity in the dynamic of giving and receiving. Stated otherwise, the transaction shares a purpose that grounds each aspect of the exchange. Drawing from Todd Gitlin (1980), McLaren illustrates how there is mutual concession, "freely" agreed upon by both parties

which maintain and perpetuate the inequality, yet rewards each at the same time (McLaren, 1998, p. 178). One cannot manifest without the other as they are mutually interdependent in the rapport of their give and take (Marmodoro, 2007). For this reason, I want to next (re)turn to Freire's notion of oppressive inscriptions on the body.

### **Freire's Notion of Oppressive Inscriptions and the Body**

Most theorists agree that the inter-dependence of oppression and anti-oppression are an inevitable “social phenomenon” that occurs in the coexistence of diverse social groups (Johnson, 2000, p. 20). Particularly prevalent in fields of social work and education, anti-oppression measures share a whole spectrum of thought, strategies, practices, and represent an even large grouping of diverse people, many of whom comprise my research subjects: new immigrants, visible minority, and low income (Clarke and Wan, 2011). Paolo Freire (1970/2009) criticised those whom society deems oppressed and marginal. He argued that the oppressed “are not people living “outside” society. They have always been “inside”—inside the structure which make them ‘being for others’” (2009, p. 74).

This concept forms the bedrock of Freire's *conscientization*,<sup>51</sup> which posits that the developments of oppressive structures are a manufactured reflection that stabilizes the hegemonic agenda. Here manufactured is used in the sense of a made product, where through active, collective liberation that they can be *un-made*. Freire accused traditional education of facilitating the continued marginalization of minorities and the poor (Freire, 2009). In response, he challenged contemporary education to impart knowledge based on a humanizing pedagogy (p. 68). Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed asks that teachers and educators, as revolutionary

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<sup>51</sup> Conscientization is critical consciousness: “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality.” See Friere, 2009 (translator’s note).

leaders, share leadership with students in a united struggle for liberation (p. 69). Ultimately, a collective struggle for redemption requires a shift in how systems and mechanisms that feed the status quo are perceived (2009, p. 54; Johnson, 2007, p. 23). Schools, therefore, carry a great share of the responsibility in social transformation.

My concern lies in the role education has assumed (or acquired?) in the process, and the existing, traditional provisions (English language acquisition and proficiency) for integrating new-to-Canada students carried out. Freire wrote that language is never neutral (2009); as I see it, neither is the process of learning. Freire proposed those deemed marginalized should not be “integrated.” as integration only perpetuates structures of oppression (Freire, 2009, p. 74). How can English-language learning in Canada, a country founded on immigration, consider alternative teaching methodologies that reduce or at least address the multiple possibilities for re-inscription of conventional oppressive hierarchies (hooks, 1994)? How is it that in the twenty-first century, when cultural statistics tell us that the minority demographic has succeeded, the majority percentage and repetition of subject/object<sup>52</sup> social positioning continues to take its place in the space of education (Government of Canada, 2014)? Closing the physical, social, and economic gaps that distance and divide newcomer students begins with an understanding of our commonalities (Omidvar and Richmond, 2003). I believe it begins with transforming how oppression enacts and reproduces itself through the body (Johnson, 2007). It begins by understanding the sameness of our differences that hegemonic-oppression continues to re-inscribe by virtue of being a body (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Damasio, 2010; Sheets-Johnstone, 1999).

In Hang *On To Your Self: Of Bodies, Embodiment, and Selves* (2004) anthropologist

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<sup>52</sup> Borrowing Freire’s definition of subject/object; “*Subjects* denotes those who know and act, in contrast to *objects*, which are known and acted upon” (Translator’s note, original italics). See Freire, 1970/2009, p. 36.

Steven Van Wolputte alludes to the idea of two bodies in the one. Van Wolputte's research focuses on the corporeality of embodiment in recognition of our two-bodied bodies: one body is physiological and the other, social and psychological. Their "different realms of experience" divide them (p. 253). Harkening back to the *pre-autobiographical* and pre-consciousness of experience I imagine Van Wolputte's two body concepts in the neutral masks *espace du moment précédent* (the space of the moment preceding). This is a space before the noise and the politics of our identities—before my languages, culture-of-origin, gender, or colour of my skin. It is not necessarily a space of understanding, but rather, more a space of being. It offers a richly fertile space of and for learning, a fleeting window of unique possibility and opportunity to foster the creative relationship of embodied experience. I am interested in "*le moment précédent*" before it quickly (and inevitably) transforms into recognizable social and symbolic representations necessary for foundational conceptual-propositional frameworks of understanding.

### **Bhabha's Third Space**

In postcolonial sociolinguistic theory Homi Bhabha (2004) located a version of *espace précédent*' in the concept of the third space (p. 55).<sup>53</sup> Third space contextualizes individual diversity, difference in the metaphorical space of what Bhabha terms hybridity, as in where our composition of cultures meet. Bhabha locates hybridity as a liminal or in-between space for negotiation between hegemonic narratives and cultural practices and structures to occur (Meredith 1998, p. 2). In order to understand hybridity and consequently Bhabha's notion of third space, I will address how Bhabha critically distinguishes between diversity and difference

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<sup>53</sup> His is more of a space between that of the colonizer/colonized, a state more in-between cognitive states or knowing than one prior to cognition and knowledge.

in the dominant host society and culture. Bhabha writes on the semblance of a “transparent norm” that appears as though it is extended to all by the host society (p. 208). He adds one caveat: “[T]he idea that cultures are diverse and that in some sense the diversity of cultures is a good and positive thing and ought to be encouraged has been known for a long time [...] these other cultures are fine but we must be able to locate them within our grid” (Rutherford, 1990, p. 208). The grid Bhabha refers to is the norm, or the appearance of unity. Upholding the idea that diversity, in this context, it becomes the salient feature of multicultural societies and subsequently the foundation of multicultural education policies (p. 208). Diversity, in this regard, is the selling point, but cultural diversity yields difference. Difference finding itself in contention with cultural norms, is subsequently othered in its constant pursuit of negotiating diversity—in relation to the host society (p. 210).<sup>54</sup>

Bhabha’s notion of hybridity is not merely the mixing of other races and cultures with that of the host country norm. On the contrary, hybridity and the third space are actually a denial of the integration and adaptation that constitute cultural diversity and locate difference in relation to otherness (pp. 210- 211). In this sense, there is both reliance and rejection of the norm and the in-betweenness that organizes hybridity (Tate, 2001). Celebrated for its diversity, a hybridity of cultures comes at the expense of restraining its difference. The third space is both a coming together and pulling apart; “it requires an/other which does not inhabit it” (Tate, 2001 p. 220). In the impossibility of this space, I would hope the newcomer student could encounter an awakening to what *is* possible in his/her settlement process—this I turn to next.

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<sup>54</sup>Peter McLaren writing on Bhabha’s diversity and difference illustrates the latter using an example from Iris Marion Young who writes difference is like “coming into the game after the rules and standards have already been set, and having to prove oneself according to those rules and standards”. Young, 1990, p. 164.

## **ELL Instruction, Acculturation and the Impossibility of Failure**

Current English language learning practices within the school system (the curriculum for grades 1-12) typically emphasize the procurement of knowledge for strengthening and developing critical/thinking skills (McLaren, 1998, p. 169). Constructivist learning theories dating as far back as Lev Vygotsky (1978) and Jean Piaget (1970), have demonstrated how the building of knowledge structures relate to cognitive development. So what happens when a new-to-Canada student feels or recognizes that what she or he knows, or rather, the language in which she or he knows, is perceived as *less*, as outside what Diane Fuss calls the commerce of the “magic circle” of those “in the know” (Fuss, 1989, p. 115). This becomes even more pronounced in English-language learning as newcomer students who are not only transitioning many of their fundamental prior learning experiences into another language, but also transitioning into another socio-cultural system of learning instruction and curriculum.

In 2007, Citizenship Immigration Canada registered the settlement of 236,758 new permanent residents<sup>55</sup> many of whom have children who had neither French nor English language ability in all Atlantic, Prairie Provinces, Quebec, Ontario, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut inclusive (2008). Integrating the day-to-day realities of these statistics within processes of acculturation comes with no shortage of differences that define and/or divide us as human beings, beyond that of language to include issues of class, race, and religion that comprise our diversities. In *The Trouble with Diversity: How We Learned to Love Identity and Ignore Inequality* (2006) author, Walter Benn Michaels argues that “we love race, and we love

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<sup>55</sup> In Ontario, immigrant claimants from source countries of Africa and the Middle East, Asia and Pacific, South and Central America collectively capped 70% of the population, outweighing the number of U.S., U.K., and Europeans (30%) claimants in 2007. See Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *About Us*. Date Modified: 2008-03-30.

[the] identities to which it has given birth,” but this does not necessarily translate into a love of class, i.e. inequality—let alone doing something to address it (p. 6). Settling in the new life space of today’s Canadian “cultural capital” presents much larger adjustment repercussions in direct proportion to the statistical demographic of peoples seeking shelter in this country (Bourdieu, 1993). A deeper investigation into present integration paradigms involves a renegotiation of the diasporic framework, as we know it, and through re-envisioning greater awareness in the ELL classroom—that begins with how we prepare our most influenced, receptive, young new Canadians.

Indeed, my research leads me to ask, the purpose of English instruction in our schools. Of course, the obvious answer is to follow the language of instruction to converse and effectively integrate into the dominant language speaking classrooms. That is to say, it is a method of preparation designed to help students better integrate into mainstream society (The Ontario Curriculum, 2007, p. 4). Yet I question how Ontario education presents and approaches language learning, regardless of its presumed intent and purpose to be beneficial (Carozzi, 2005, p. 25). Is it necessary to overlook (temporarily) initial counterproductive consequences and/or implications of cultural alterity that a language learning process of integration may yield? It is clear that there is a fundamental connection between language and culture, but what of the primary relationship between new language learning and the body-self. Speaking and moving are not separate happenings, but functions of a greater “persistent whole” known as the living organism (Haldane, 1931, p. 13; Damasio, 2010; Sheets-Johnston, 1999). When placing emphasis on the success of the verbal, communicative, function of language learning literacy development, what becomes of the other parts that make up its whole? Is it not natural that the one aspect would further reinforce the dominance of the English language subject position over that of the speaking embodied

subject? Carozzi's (2005) view on the scholastic construction of the body, maintains that although "the body does not speak, read or write, it still retains and reproduces a social and cultural memory" (p. 25). Returning to Merleau-Ponty's triad of orders of expression, the body continues to make its own meaning outside of linguistic meaning.

Thus, in planning both my ethnographic and qualitative research study, I consider an exploration of the body's engagement in the *act* of speaking. Here, the body contributes beyond the limited uses that continue to define, engage, and inhabit it, independent of, mind and reason, that Carozzi argues perpetuates its objectification (Carozzi, 2005, p. 29). Could the current practices and structure of language learning potentially do more harm than good? What cultural hegemonic messages continue to reinforce the social identity of the newcomers' student in an effort to get them up-to-speed and on the same "English speaking page" to join their peers in mainstream classrooms (i.e. the purpose and goals of the provincial documents)? Emphasizing the dominant spoken language provides advantages to the native-speaking classmate over the disadvantaged newcomers' first language; so does the focus on successful outcomes and English language competency/proficiency continue a paradigmatic definition of the newcomer as the socially acceptable *other*?

### **The Uniqueness of the ELL Classroom**

In recent years, considerable re-evaluation of English language learning has led to a broadening of linguistic curricula giving rise to new models that contain the potential for the exploration of a third space (John-Steiner, Panofsky, Smith, 1994, p. 1). I have specifically chosen to locate my study in the mainstream English language-learning classroom mainly to emphasize how the physical spaces we occupy have a huge impact on our daily lives—especially

those located within schools (Gallagher, 2007). Space creates place and place organizes meaning (Lefebvre, 1991). Similar to theatre, space is “an *a priori* criterion” intersecting bodies, objects, language, ideologies, cultures and so forth (Hanawalt and Kobialka, 2000). As human beings, we naturally project ourselves into the three dimensions of space (height, width, and depth) when we stand, move, and extend our limbs. All the while, these projections shape the ways in which we move, become informed, interact with others in the shared (Goldman, 1999, p. 1). A complex relationship exists between space and social relations, rendering space pliant and open to interpretation (Johnstone, 1981, p. 183). I situate movement pedagogy for English language learning at this crossroads.

The English language-learning classroom is a unique kind of space within Ontario schools. There is a different kind of learning going on here. I would argue that there is a far greater learning trajectory for students in these spaces of learning in comparison to those of their peers in mainstream classrooms. The learning of language is, quite simply, difficult (Britzman, 1991). It takes great courage to open your mouth and speak a language that is not your own. For those of who have tried, it is humbling. It reveals how a limited vocabulary can make you feel child-like, inferior, or even less intelligent. The experience may also elicit feelings of silliness, awkward self-consciousness, or self-estrangement—much like hearing your recorded voice.

Citizenship/immigration Canada (CIC) and the Ministry of Education both recognize the needs of these students through the development of the *Settlement Workers in the Schools* (SWIS) program initiatives found in high-needs settlement areas of the Greater Toronto Area (CIC, 2008). These programs, as I elaborate on below, have developed an indispensable partnership with schools for attending to the administrative and bureaucratic immigration requirements. Yet my research seeks to go further, and address the newcomer body in the

sensorial and visceral experience of English language. In so doing, I argue for new pedagogical practices of ELL that pivot on the embodiment of language.

There are three practical points to consider *vis-à-vis* newcomer students and language acquisition as the form of social communication. They are: a) English is a requisite in our Ontario school systems; b) It is also a need among Canadian-born children of immigrant parents<sup>56</sup> and; c) The new to English language student demographic is largely made up of visible and/or (defined as) socio-economic minorities.<sup>57</sup> Despite ELL policy and procedure documentation to prevent alterity and difference in our schools, the demands that come with the combination of these three factors, all but set-up discrepancies of imbalance and inequity (Hastings and Manning, 2004 original italics).

My thesis seeks to analyze how the methods in which newcomer students are taught the new language not only affects their acquisition and proficiency outcome, but who they are in cultural relation to the learning, to the English language and how these factors affect their development of what it means to be Canadian. I am advocating for an inter-corporeal approach to language learning by focusing on what John Dewey (1958) referred to as the “impulsion” of experience in the act of expression. Not to be confused with the word impulse, Dewey’s “impulsion” motivates active engagement as source of linguistic meaning making (1958, p. 58). Inclusion of a body-supplement is not reliant on speech proficiency. The supplement is not concerned with limited vocabulary or heritage language accent and inflection. It offers a place in

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<sup>56</sup> A study conducted by the CBC on the Peel District School Board (PDSB) in 2011 indicated how approximately 30% of Canadian-born elementary school students need help with their English speaking skills, largely because they are exposed to their mother tongue at home. The study showed that of the close to 90,000 students in the PDSB, almost half (40,000) needed extra English instruction - approximately 25,000 being born in Canada, and the remaining 15,000, having immigrated to Canada. See CBC.ca/news. Language specialists have long identified the “sensitive period” for language learning fluency begins to decline soon after puberty. See Tecumseh Fitch, 2010.

<sup>57</sup> CIC statistics on ethno cultural diversity: In 2011, 13.7% of newcomers were born in Europe, while another 3.9% were born in the United States. The remaining 82.4% came from Asia (including the Middle East), the Caribbean and Central and South America, Africa and Oceania and other regions. See CIC Statistics: ‘Visible minority population’

the space of the ELL classroom outside the signs and symbols of language inequities that could inadvertently put students at a disadvantage as they begin the settlement integration process.

### **At the Intersection of Education and Newcomer Settlement**

The process of settlement is, in and of itself, a unique experience given each individual student's departure from her or his country-of-origin and arrival in Canada. Furthermore, schools don't necessarily concern themselves with aspects of settlement in the way that settlement organizations and subsidiaries of Citizenship Immigration Canada (CIC) outlines—or rather defines—the settlement process, once the newcomer has arrived. In this section, my objective is to illustrate how the unique partnership between the CIC and Ministry of Education unites the social needs and services of settlement with schools, in an effort to support newcomer families and their families during the initial adjustment period of a new life in Canada. Why are settlement services located in schools? And, more significantly, what is their impact on embodied learning in ELL? The CIC recognized how particularly difficult the first few years in Canada can be for newcomer students and their families (2008). In a *People for Education* (2012) reports Ontario has publicly funded schools, 95% of students attending publicly funded schools in the province of Ontario represent a diverse range of social and cultural backgrounds (p. 3). Furthermore, 60% of English-language elementary schools and 54% of secondary schools have students enrolled who are English language learners, and 40% of elementary schools with English language learners rely on the school system with no external connections to community settlement programs (p. 2). Thus, collaborating with the school system is not only an option—it is a responsibility. It is a sure-fire way to provide opportunities for newcomer students to understand better the various aspects of their settlement. The value of locating settlement

services in schools is that it provides support for families by helping facilitate their settlement process in Canada. They are the liaison between the students, their families, school staff and resources in the school and in the community (Catholic Cross-Cultural Services, 2005).

### **Speaking from Experience—the Loophole**

My experiences working with newcomer youth influenced the critical reflections and analyses on settlement programming discussed in this section. I got my first glimpse into the complicated world of immigration service programming during my time at a newcomer agency in a high volume settlement catchment area of Toronto. From 2006 to 2010, I coordinated and facilitated summer theatre-based programs for new-to-Canada youth, 15-21 year-olds in the agencies newcomer youth centre (NYC).<sup>58</sup> Several of the youths accepted to the program came from schools affiliated with the Settlement Workers in the Schools (SWIS) program. I provide a detailed outline, including the purpose and function of SWIS, in proceeding sections. The NYC was a specialized service<sup>59</sup> through which settlement school workers (SWs) recommend specific youth (in-need) to the program. These referrals could stem from either end of the spectrum, including youth who were having trouble in the school system and requiring more one-on-one support, or the opposite of newcomer youth needing stimulus outside their English competency/grade assessment and placement within the school system.<sup>60</sup>

I learned about the agency's conflict-resolution strategizing approach to help address fundamental settlement transition difficulties particular to the diverse communities using their

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<sup>58</sup> The settlement agency newcomer youth centre is a unique collaboration between theatre and youth who have recently immigrated to Canada. Through Service Canada's Summer Job Program, the agency, arts council funding and several other non-governmental organization (NGO) funding, the program is able to provide an hourly wage for young people to participate in an 8-9 week theatre intensive program. This is an opportunity to offer youths their first Canadian employment while helping their creative development, communication skills and self-esteem. Due to the fluctuating amount of funding received annually, space is limited.

<sup>59</sup> "Specialized settlement services address individual needs, such as counseling on cultural barriers, family problems, occupational concerns, racism, and other stress-related settlement issues." See Sadiq (2004, p. 13).

<sup>60</sup> 'placing students in lower levels...due to language difficulties' (Best Practices, p. 42)

services. On one particular occasion, the job-search project leader shared a “loophole” in the system’s programming; namely, the solution to an unemployment problem came in the form of providing office space and computers to assist out-of-work newcomers find jobs, yet they had no ability to offer money. I came to understand this was a frequent dilemma encountered in many of the programs and shared by several agencies—a blind spot between servicing, expectancy, and meeting of immediate needs. In a review of newcomer settlement services in Canada, Karim Sadiq (2004) identifies “spatial mismatches” between immigrant settlement policy, the supply of settlement services and the demand for settlement services (p.2). Immigrant settlement agencies (ISAs) are in a difficult position, caught between what they are capable of offering the newcomer, in the way of organization and delivery of community services, and attending to the more sensitive personal and life situations that arise *from* the challenges and pressures to acquire them (Family Service Association of Toronto, 2000).

Settlement programs are on the front line for so many essential newcomer services: the practical logistics of finding a place to live, requiring child supervision, to seek out employment, in order to work, to earn money, and so forth. However, ISAs cannot provide shelter or daycare, nor are they in position to offer work, act as a bank, or provide a myriad of other pragmatic requirements of day-to-day living. Sadiq attributes this loophole to the two-tiered internal politics of settlement servicing (Sadiq, 2004, p.5). Large multi-service agencies that are financially dependent on government subsidies sub-contract settlement work to smaller ethno-specific ISAs. Similarly, the survival of many smaller agencies requires some sort of dependency or alliance with the larger agencies. Taking the supply and demand of Sadiq’s “mismatch” slightly out of context, with the critical requirements of settlement services and new-to-Canada communities

accessing those services, ISAs can respond to, and assist with, identifying and facilitating newcomer needs, but they cannot outright provide them.<sup>61</sup>

In several of my interactions with youth at the agency, I encountered similar tensions between the administrative ideal behind the mandated NYC program, many of which fell under my job description, and the living human experiences that more often than not accompanied them in practice. In other words, there was a noticeable discrepancy between the paperwork outline of my job parameters versus the “life stuff” that often presented itself, which often impeded what it was I was hired to do. One of my job requirements included reporting any display of distressed “behaviour” to the NYC manager. This could indicate masked difficulties the youths were experiencing in their settlement. In these circumstances, counselling, and/or some other form of psychological talk-therapy related service might be necessary (Family Service Association of Toronto, 2000; Clarke and Wan, 2011). I could see, in times like this, how beneficial the easy-access, interconnectedness of newcomer-related services could be, for the agency, in the short term. What I could not see concerning the group of youths in my program was what monitoring signs of ‘behaviour’ signified to them, and how referring it elsewhere, was preparing them to manage on their own—in the long term. I thought I had found *this* program’s loophole.

The job description was to facilitate a theatre program to help newcomer youth express prevalent issues, concerns, and situations, related to *being* a newcomer in Canada. Uncensored, in the safety and confidentiality of the agency, the program encourages youths to share all types of injustices and issues. It is designed is to ensure the building of confidence, strengthening of their convictions, and confronting of any acculturation difficulties they have encountered. That is to say, the program is a place to recognize the importance of their individual historical cultures,

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<sup>61</sup> For example, a family general practitioner can be considered a basic need; ISA’s can provide a list or suggest some medical references within the newcomer family community, but cannot outright assure that they will be taken on as a patient.

to celebrate their diversity, address racism, language barriers, social media, bullying and religion—a space to explore what it means to be Canadian. These are all difficult themes and equally, all capable of eliciting ‘behaviour’.

The loophole I had stumbled upon was actually twofold in nature. The first arose in my role as facilitator, as I had to determine what constituted behaviour,<sup>62</sup> and the second resulted from the realization that this identification would be taken outside the program and relegated to some other form of (cognitive) intervention as deemed qualified by the agency. I felt the behaviours that surfaced were in direct relation to the theatre work. I couldn’t see how what I was hired to do was help the youths, when I was being asked to interpret expressions of their settlement, to have them then taken out of context and then segregated from the program, too. I began to wonder about settlement conflict/resolution strategizing. I questioned the settlement methods and procedures in place for analyzing diversity. In settlement servicing there are clear practices in place for ensuring careful measures to prevent further displacement and dislocation. Yet perhaps settling is a response to the *unsettling* aspects of settlement. To un-settle newcomers would hardly seem the compassionate or considerate thing to do. In the experience of my NYC group, the programming loopholes were inevitable. They made me question whether the lure and ensnarement of inaccessible issues of acculturation through the guise of theatre could work as a resolution to newcomer youth programming—or reproduce the conflict. In other words, I began to wonder about assumptions being made here, not only about the role of leadership, cultural competence and cultural dominancy, but equally, about the thinking-feeling and knowing-doing of the newcomer youths’ settlement experiences. What was being valued? What groundwork was

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<sup>62</sup> I would like to note that this questioning of the facilitator role is particular to me and what prompted me to further newcomer youth settlement research at a doctoral level. I felt there was an assumption on the organizations part and/or external funders who approved of the newcomer youth center program that whoever took on the role would execute the position along the same lines. Truth be told, I don’t think it was even a consideration, by this I mean, I don’t think the traditional ‘talk therapy’ approach to problems was a specific model being used, but rather just a given. This is what I mean by their ‘loophole’.

being established or reinforced for the youths and by the youths in processes of settlement? How did these processes and procedures for newcomer youth settlement influence the way in which they were settled? The NYC program was specifically mandated to help youth face issues that were not easily accessible; however, the manner in which the behaviours were interpreted aligned them into policies and procedures already in place. I questioned the tacit ways in which this ‘resolution’ to the ‘conflict’ adhered to traditional ideologies and social practices of the newcomer in the dominant culture—especially as the NYC program was put in place to assist with the more vulnerable youth during their integration (McLaren, 1998, p. 187). This led me to investigate the meaning behind the concept of settlement and the hope and promise that integrating (settling) students can make to education.

### **Settlement, Settling, to Settle**

The online Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines the word settlement composed of the verb ‘settle’ and the suffix ‘ment’, as follows:

The placing of persons or things in a fixed or permanent position...The act of settling oneself, or state of being settled, in a fixed place or position, in a permanent abode...The act of settling as colonists or new-comers; the act of peopling or colonizing a new country, or of planting a colony. (OED, 2013)

A deeper look into its etymology shows that the use of the word settlement in this same colonizing definition of fixing or steadyng communities of people traces back to the seventeenth century.<sup>63</sup> Canadian immigration “settled” on this term and its varied derivatives, for “to settle” and “settling” processes refer to the establishing of basic essentials for a life in Canada. Its

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<sup>63</sup> Online Etymology Dictionary: (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=settlement>)

meaning begins to broaden in a legal and financial context, as in the settlement of an account or payment, by the early 1700s. Canada speaks of immigration through a settlement purview, of settlement services and the settlement experience (Sadiq, 2004, p.1). Suzan Ilcan's (2002) *Longing in Belonging: The Cultural Politics of Settlement* addresses the globalizing era in Canada, which is a pivotal settlement player both on the world stage and in Ilcan's study. Her research illuminated, for me, how the term "settlement" has extended far beyond its dictionary definition to become part of a growing lexicon reflective of the ever-expanding movement, transit and transition of global migration (Ilcan, 2002, p. 55). In the world of immigration, the term is no longer a neologism, but a part of procedural advances *vis-à-vis* applying for, and obtaining of, citizenship in this country. The language of immigration itself, then, is on the move. It is no longer advisable to use exclusionary othering in words like "foreigner" or "outsider" to identify learners new to the English language, and these words have been replaced by the more non-discriminatory sounding newcomer; so too has settlement found its place in the advancing lexicon of global migration.

The terms newcomer and settlement have become the preferred and more inclusive-sounding words to soften the stigma and marginalization of older, more overtly negative social designations. Although immigrants have been settling in Canada for centuries, the study of immigrant settlement services and settlement experiences, of which my research is a part, is a relatively recent phenomenon (Sadiq, 2004). A 2015 project conducted at the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft Institute examined what they refer to as "the new global migrant," one who settles in one of these three high-diversity urban locations: New York, Singapore, Johannesburg. Calling attention to the ever more diverse characteristics of today's em/im/gration, the article states

“everybody is from anywhere” and thus contributing to a new social diversity of globalized cities (New Social diversity in global cities, para. 1).

Settlement today, then, can no longer sustain the same structural sensibilities as say those that existed in my father’s time of the 1950s. Back then, Canadian immigration invited culture-specific demographics of Western European labourers, “mostly in unskilled and semi-skilled positions,” to help grow the work force in a variety of blue-collar jobs including manufacturing, slaughterhouses, meat-processing plants, automobile industry, factories, and seasonal work such as construction (Hall, 2001, p. 5; Iacovetta, 1992, pp.57- 65). Today in Canada, settlement service initiatives are the shared responsibility of the federal government, provincial government, and the not-for-profit sector. They oversee who (e.g., immigrants and refugees) receives programming by agencies (e.g., ISAs, community centres, public library’s, school system) disperse programs, and to what end (e.g., Immigrant Social Adaptation Program, the Host Program, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada Program, Newcomer Settlement Program, and Settlement Workers in the Schools) (Sadiq, 2004; Kilbride and Anisef, 2001). Along with the volume of ethnically diverse peoples crisscrossing continents, oceans, and hemispheres, are the cultures, customs, and languages that travel—and consequently *settle*, with them. For that matter, the greater Toronto area (GTA) has one of the largest urban concentrations of ethnocultural diversity in the world. As a result, Citizenship Immigration Canada (CIC) recognizes the major adjustments those families face as they settle here (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). In an article titled *A City of Unmatched Diversity*, Toronto Star newspaper reporter Francine Keung (2007) reports on data released by Statistics Canada’s 2006 census indicating that 49.9% of Toronto’s population was “foreign-born,” making it one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the world (The Toronto Star, 2007). Settlement today reflects *who* is settling in

the country, *how* the present established procedures in place assist in their settlement, and *what* else is there to offer. The CIC, together with social and community funding bodies, and non-governmental organizations (NGO), continue to fine-tune integration and adaptation programming in order to help meet the diverse needs of those migrating to Canada who rely on settlement services.

My work with settlement organizations and collaborations with the school board affiliated programs has allowed me to develop a rapport and insight into the impact of settlement and schooling. Through my mainstream education affiliations as an artist-educator, and through the implementation of my theatre-based workshop in an ELL context, I have found the classroom teacher is often not aware of the term “settlement” and its history of associations and connotations. On more than one occasion I have been asked, “what do you mean by settlement?” Hence, the word may be part of the vastly changing nomenclature in the world of immigration (*vis-à-vis* the processes of requesting and obtaining citizenship), but its purpose remains at best misunderstood and its potential underdeveloped as it winds its way into the schooling community and education system through the bodies of the students.

## **Settlement Graph**

Citizenship Immigration Canada created this graphic<sup>64</sup> to help better inform teachers about the many issues that newcomer students have to navigate, in their settlement, outside the classroom:

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<sup>64</sup> SWIS News and Notes no. 5, 2003<sup>64</sup>



Out of all the systems represented, education is the one that offers some degree of comprehensive assurance that all new-to-Canada families with children and youth can have access to all the other systems through the “one-stop referral” gateway located in the school (George and Shera, 1999/2000). This visual depiction illustrates human figures encircled by the settlement services and their respective social systems. It emphasizes how significant systemic and organizational pressures can be for newcomer families who are establishing themselves, and their identities, once they leave the country of origin.

There are several assumptions made in this graphic. First, the nuclear family stereotype as the primary social unit is shown as consisting of a father, mother and the two children (one female, one male), and second, it says nothing about the large percentage of newcomer youth who are *without* family, displaced from their family and arriving in Canada as unaccompanied minors.<sup>65</sup> All fundamental social services whether health care, childcare, employment centres or public transit, for example, are complex systems encountered by newcomers—and often navigated all at the same time. It is no surprise, then, that given the abundance of new information, navigating the system in a foreign language/culture can be overwhelming.

The graphic also clearly demonstrates how the education system is just one of many new systems that young newcomers encounter. Youth, more often than not, adapt much faster—as do

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<sup>65</sup> On their current website, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) advocates for the keeping of families together. See <http://www.ocasi.org/>.

families in the middle class or in which the parents have professions—these factors generally help with a better adjustment period (Smyser, 1987, p. 38). In many households, it is common to encounter children taking on the role of an adult as they become the family interpreter, often accompanying parents to complete systemic-related immigration requirements (Lacroix, 2004). The attention paid to and program investment in newcomer youth has without a doubt helped deepen an understanding of settlement and subsequently humanize the process, as it connects the bureaucracy of immigration with the struggles of family life.

Uniting education with newcomer settlement effectively amalgamates many of the necessary services *within* the system of the school. Thanks to Canada's commitment as a signing member of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and taken together with the Education Act, primary and secondary education is both available and obligatory for children and youth regardless of their families' immigration status (Section 49.1). The Toronto District School Board's(TDSB) website states:

Children not born in Canada who are living in Toronto without Canadian immigration status are welcome and eligible to attend TDSB schools without payment of admission fees. Any document, which verifies the student's legal name, date of birth, home address, custody papers where applicable, and date of entry to Canada (required for ESL funding purposes), is acceptable for TDSB school registration. A passport (travel document) may be used to verify the student's name, date of birth and date of entry to Canada, in the absence of an immigration document or birth certificate. Where there is no official document to verify the required information, the TDSB accepts written signed letters of confirmation of the student's information from lawyers, notary publics, medical doctors, or

other persons of recognized standing in the Toronto community. (Toronto District School Board (TDSB), n.d.)

Furthermore, the ministries of education in each province have mandated school boards in all provinces across the country that they cannot refuse to admit students because they and/or their parents do not have proper immigration papers (CLEO, 2012). The emphasis placed on the learning of English language makes educational spaces attentive to integration needs of newcomer students by virtue of its liaison with the *Settlement and Education Partnership in Toronto* (SEPT) programming.

A municipal/GTA branch of the larger provincial *Settlement Workers in the Schools* (SWIS) program has had tremendous success in its school board affiliations. SWIS is the culmination of a great deal of effort by the CIC, settlement agencies, and boards of education initiative. It is worth exploring SEPT/SWIS as the second method through which newcomer youths receive integration assistance in the school system. Paying particular attention to the parameters delegated to the SEPT worker—including their well-defined jurisdiction *within* the school—I want to outline the actual programs in place. This demonstrates how the partnership has been operating since implementation over a decade ago. I consider the broader context within which students are settling to understand better, how language education—including an ELL body-supplemental—can further assist and prepare the new global immigrant referred to in the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft study.

In 1998, the SEPT project emerged as result of a provincial call to assist newcomer families and their needs. One year later in 1999 saw the launch of the SWIS program. Although SEPT was first conceived as SWIS in Toronto, its broader appointed SWIS title has now become the name for settlement programming agencies in ten regions throughout the province of Ontario,

including: Durham, Niagara, York, Hamilton, Ottawa, Waterloo, London, Peel, and Windsor-Essex.<sup>66</sup> As of 2010, there are approximately 250 settlement workers, from 22 settlement agencies, based in schools in 22 school boards, and the numbers are growing (Settlement Workers in the Schools, 2010). The Toronto region alone has burgeoned to include seven clusters in an effort to reach families settling in different areas throughout the GTA that service almost 200 middle and senior, public and catholic schools.<sup>67</sup> In 2007, SWIS launched settlement programming in the province of British Columbia serving school districts in Vancouver, the Lower Mainland, and Victoria, before expanding to ten more, in the Central Okanagan, Chilliwack, Coquitlam, Langley, Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows, Mission, Nanaimo-Ladysmith, Prince George, Peace River North and West Vancouver (Macpherson, 2011).

The principal objective of the SWIS program is to assist school-aged children and their families with settlement needs. This includes cultural interpretation, organization and/or facilitation of settlement-related events and information sessions, individual work with clients, outreach to newcomers, project maintenance, as well as managing extensive liaisons for information and referral services (George and Shera, 1999/2000). Community agencies typically hire settlement workers for placement in either Public or Catholic school boards, or directly by the school board through CIC funding. Largely, this enterprising partnership continues to flourish in its now, fifteenth year of operation. Each contributing sector maintains its fair share of representative appointees (lead agency from each cluster, TDSB, CIC) who oversee its structure, make up a Steering Committee that mandates and recommends project changes (George and Shera, 1999/2000). The program continues to adhere to its founding beliefs that “a student’s educational capacity is directly related to his/her life outside the school and sense of welcoming

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<sup>66</sup> The SWIS program name varies from location to location. For example, in Peel Region, the program is the Multicultural Settlement and Education Partnership (MSEP).

<sup>67</sup> A cluster is group of settlement teams within different neighbourhoods of the Greater Toronto Area that facilitate the same resources to cooperatively assist in helping all immigrant families within their jurisdiction access settlement needs as they transition to life in Canada.

inside the school' (SWIS, 2010). Although SWIS works in conjunction with the school system, it does have a set of outside-the-school criteria to meet, as well as inside-the-school criteria and boundaries to which they much adhere. As I outline the settlement services/education partnership throughout this section, I expand on these SWIS benchmarks and borders.

Perhaps the most obvious benefit of the SWIS program is the interconnectedness of newcomer-related social services. These include everything from health care to recreation to legal issues. Settlement workers are the front-line people who connect the services with newcomers. The SWIS worker provides individual services for both parents and students, as well as servicing needs for the school to/for the newcomer. In theory, the role and purpose of the settlement workers presence in the school system is outlined as follows, someone who:

1. Proactively contacts newcomer parents (and youth in secondary schools) to assist them with their settlement needs
2. Refers families to more specialized community resources as needed
3. Provides group information sessions for newcomer youths and parents, often in partnership with school staff
4. Provides orientation about the settlement needs of newcomers for school staff

(<http://swisontario.ca/2/About-Us>)

In my experiences working with SWIS programs, I would add that settlement workers are often the “voice” that interprets settlement experiences for the newcomer in their language of origin. Settlement workers are the human contact for newcomers; the workers are the face of almost all of the administrative processes required by the systems of settlement. They not only relay information to the student and her or his family, but they also communicate the school’s voice and expectations back to the student. It is a unique relationship in which good rapport and trust

are essential. Jerry Wu, a SWIS manager with SWIS Vancouver school board, takes it a step further: “It’s not just information, they (settlement workers) also help them (newcomers) transfer from one culture to another culture” (Macpherson, 2011). The word “culture” connotes two fields of reference: the first speaks “to the arts and higher learning [...] the second [...] is much more holistic and inclusive. It adopts a more anthropological approach: life-ways, patterned events, and belief systems all understood as part of culture” (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p. 10). Wu uses the word culture in the latter sense. He describes how SIWS programming is a committed engagement that often blurs the lines between professional assistance and compassionate understanding. For that matter, the SW acronym can easily be confused with “social worker,” and in many respects the work is very similar—minus the training and degree.

Settlement workers engage in a variety of settlement areas like case management, learning disabilities, mental health issues, and including the rudiments of school protocol—report cards, parent/teacher meetings and so forth. Seeking out suitable settlement workers to train for the job lies in recruiting candidates who can connect with the more in-demand cultures needing settlement representation. Settlement reports have identified these as newcomer families emigrating from South Asia, South East Asia (and their dialects), Africa, the Middle East and Eastern bloc countries (Centre for Applied Social Research, 1999/2000). This requires someone who is part of the highly identified areas/cultural regions settling in Canada or can speak one of the many primary languages.

Today, the demand for the SWIS/Education/Citizenship Immigration Canada amalgamation has skyrocketed. Statistically, the SEPT program in one of Toronto’s largest clusters, the North York Community House (NYCH), has assisted over 20,000 newcomer parents and students within secondary, middle, and elementary schools over the past four years alone

(NYCH, 2013). Add to this the figures of the other six clusters, and these numbers could easily reach the 100,000 mark—and that is only within the Greater Toronto Area. The programs and assisting the systemic needs particular to settlement requirements, are certainly working, in the sense of meeting a demand for services.

Yet I want to conclude this chapter, with its focus on the intersection of education and settlement, with a point that Jim Cummins, a leading scholar in second-language education, offers. I interviewed Cummins for my Master's thesis, and he shared this perspective: "Teachers are never going to be fully prepared by the pre-service program. Additional qualification courses that are set up for ELL teachers are largely pretty good. It is pretty hard to squeeze anything to do with ESL students into our pre-service program. It's not yet seen as something that needs to be injected or infused into the regular classroom, that is, regular pre-service for *all* teachers." In the short-term, his solution to this dilemma was that programming outside the education system (such as SWIS and SEPT) are services that have room for expansion, much more so than consecutive and concurrent teacher training programming (Pascetta, 2009). In the long term, he felt the changes needed to occur at the level of Universities Faculties of Education: "First thing is for the Directors of Education around the GTA to get together and write other Faculties of Education and say here's the kind of teacher that we want. Here are the kinds of questions that we are going to ask them about supporting students—ELL students—in the mainstream classroom. Therefore, if there is someone training to be, or taking science as their major, you may be a very good science teacher, but if they do not know how to teach the kids who are at various stages in the process of learning English, they are not good in this context. And one of the questions that they're going to be asked is how do you support students who have been here for one year and are in your science class?"

In conclusion, I want to stress an important point *vis-à-vis* the larger scope of my study: the structures of English-language learning are necessary for newcomer students to express and partake in the dominant culture. Settlement practices such as SWIS and SEPT, driven by good will for language integration, are to help educate and improve all students, where speech acquisition and proficiency are a necessary precondition for developmental methods of knowledge building. My thesis does not dispute this fact or education's responsibility in procuring it. *Habitus*, physical capital, and social reproduction, are not contained merely to one's socio-economic standing. Linguistic and cultural factors are of great significance. Zander Navarro's (2006) claim that *habitus* "is not fixed or permanent, and can be changed under unexpected situations or over a long historical period," is of great interest to my research (p. 16). It suggests mobility, transition, and possibility. Navarro offers a very simple equation of a very complex Bourdieuan concept: "[*(habitus)* (*capital*)] + field = practices" (p. 16). With this equation in mind, the next chapter initiates the first of three research study chapters that speak to my thesis of a body-based supplemental practice. Based on the intersected fields of mask making and ELL, I demonstrate how they may be able to address the change of mainstream language learning and newcomer integration methodologies through an alternative discipline-specific approach.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Jacques Lecoq: An Authoethnographic Analysis

Having just drawn a cross-section of scholarly literature and contemporary settlement practices within and beyond the domain of education, I move forward in this chapter by detailing Lecoquian methods. As I argue, these select applied methods are considerations for current ELL practices in mainstream education, as an alternate, supplementary movement-based approach.

In this chapter, I break down some keywords of Lecoq's pedagogy, including "*le voyage*" and "*poétique*." By situating the conceptual language for the reader, I can establish the groundwork for areas that engage theories amenable to an ELL context. It is important to note than none of the Lecoquian concepts function as entirely separate entities. To explain them as groundwork for my field research, however, I isolate their meanings first to demonstrate how they enrich experience in ultimately interdependently ways.

In this chapter, I also incorporate the autoethnographic portion of this research study's analysis, describing and analyzing my own experience with Jacques Lecoq and his methods in greater depth. Over a ten-year intensive period I submersed myself in Lecoquian technique, two as a student at his school and six seasons in a Lecoq-based international repertoire theatre company (*Théâtre de la Jacquerie*). Thus, this uniquely positions me, in the words of Tami Spry (2001), as the "active agent with narrative authority" in the critical reflection on my experiences as a Lecoq practitioner (p.711).

Spry's work on emerging autoethnographic writing styles introduces the notion of autoethnographic performance as a convergence of the "autobiographic impulse" with and in the "ethnographic moment" (p. 709). This particular approach to autoethnography reframed my learning experience *chez Lecoq*, which has remained a part of me ever since my training took

place. In preparing to write this research study, though, I went through what McLaren (1998) might call a “repatterning” of language concepts (p. 192).<sup>68</sup> By describing and narrating this bodily experience, which explicitly required verbal silence, I strive to find the words to develop a conceptualization of a body-supplemental practice for newcomer youth, one whose location derives from the space and experience of physical theatre.

In presenting an overview of Jacques Lecoq’s pedagogy, I focus on the development of the unusually broad interdisciplinarity of his applied practice (p. 192). Lecoq picked attributes, practices and philosophies from physical education, anthropology, visual arts, music, literature, and architecture. He then used these attributes to analyze physical movements as an extension of internal human creative impulse (being-ness). I track between the moment of experiencing this pedagogy myself, revisiting my (often point-form) notes taken while at the Lecoq School, and the moment of later and more reflexive analysis on that experience and links it to Lecoq’s own writing and theories of his work/practice. This layered analysis, as I discussed in my introduction, enables me to fully explore the implications of my experience and translate them to the educational outcomes for which I advocate in this research.

It is worth noting at the outset that note-taking in class at the Lecoq School was forbidden, at least during class time. Yet many students like me could be found scribbling down what occurred directly after a particular lesson, or, as I was not always consistent in my strategies, I wrote after school, evenings, and weekends. These were also reflexive accounts. I now see how my attempts to record details about what I was doing, how I was feeling, who I was with, was a way of capturing the moment. Autoethnographer Carolyn Ellis calls this the taking of field note

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<sup>68</sup> Taken slightly out of context, McLaren’s use of repatterning is part of a larger discussion on schooling and the ‘unmaking’ and ‘making over’ of student subjectivities. In this section of McLaren’s book on Critical Pedagogy, he is connecting the notion of repatterning to Giroux’s “language of possibility”. See McLaren, p. 192.

'snapshots' (2004, p. 9).<sup>69</sup> In the five diary-like notebooks covering the 1990-1992 period of time I was a student at the School, I would describe the writing as more of a journal. I included descriptions of the lesson, how I experienced the lesson, but also particular viewpoints on Paris life and my ever-expanding perspectives as a twenty-something living abroad. I don't recall giving much thought to the structuring of these notes, for I merely recorded the specific class (e.g., Acrobatics, Improv, Scene Study, Movement, Style, writing, L.E.M., which stood for Laboratoire Ecriture Mouvement, or *Autocours* 'self-lessons').

*Autocours* was where we, the students, would work on the teacher-instructed lesson in groups without the teacher's assistance, a specific and unique component to Lecoq's pedagogy and process of creative development. It offers an opportunity for me to provide a sample of these notes—their tone, approach, focus and phrasing:

*February 1, 1991: It's Friday night and I just got in from the 'Cajun', a local bar that we frequent after (before, during!) school. Typical, I smell like cigarettes ... thoroughly dowsed in generous compliments on a performance given this afternoon. I don't remember if I explained how each Friday we present a piece in our chosen groups on a theme given to us at the beginning of the week. It's called 'Autocours'. In this semester we have been working on 'l'abstrait' (the abstract): poetry, painters and short stories. Last week we looked at Bram van Velde ... despite our wonderfully energetic group, good intentions, but the final product became 'la soupe' (each Autocours is critiqued/praised by the teachers, second year students and invited guests, who make up the late-day Friday audience).*

*Actually, I felt it was more like 'le bordel' (the mess)—Lecoq was kind in calling it a soup!*

*In complete contrast, today's work was on a short story we chose by Gabriel Garcia*

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<sup>69</sup> Many of the authethnographic italicized excerpts I include in this thesis are mere snippets, some written in French, or abbreviated of longer journal entries. For the purposes of having them read coherently, I have taken liberty to flesh them out, sometimes translating or adding pertinent bits to help contextualize them for the reader.

*Marquez called ‘Bitterness for Three Sleepwalkers’. It’s incredible! This made for good, electric rehearsals. Not only was there good communication amongst our group, but no moment was ‘gratuit’ ... a good sense of creating the life of the story as opposed to working images and describing the story.*

As my notes might sketch, Lecoq’s pedagogy has been challenging for theatre scholars in performance studies. In the more than 60 years since the School opened its doors, several have written (and interviewed) Lecoq in an effort to grasp the visceral concepts of his teaching and learning practices. So it feels doubly challenging as I too attempt to not only locate words to explain his pedagogy, but then, and also, transpose that pedagogy into a distinctive and new context—ELL and newcomer settlement in Canada.

Nevertheless, because I have experienced the neutral mask in three different contexts, I believe in its transformative potential for other contexts:

1. As a theatre student learning to be *in* the mask;
2. As an arts-educator instructing its use *to* theatre students;
3. As doctoral research toward a future fourth context to be incorporated into the ELL classroom and education.

This last and latest occasion has helped me consider how to relocate the mask beyond a theatrical context to one of English language learning. My study here speaks to this potential, but before doing so, it is crucial to convey the key role and original purpose of the NM in Lecoq’s pedagogy. As I outline it below, the mask’s purpose and outcome as a theatrical technique to one of embodied language integration may share a similar learning objective—but not the same learning outcome. I select relevant aspects of Lecoq’s pedagogy—in the way of embodied strategies—to consider the body—in the experience of ELL as a settlement practice.

## On Jacques Lecoq

To offer some historical context for Lecoq's pedagogy, consider the period in time when his School first opened its doors. Mid-twentieth century France was producing some of the greatest intellectual thinkers—Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, and Merleau-Ponty, to name but a prominent few. Considering the fervency of the era, the Paris backdrop was one of literary, artistic, aesthetic decadence, in which Existentialism was all but *de rigueur*. Within the spirit of such radicalism, arrived Lecoq.

One could speculate that perhaps he was challenging theories that presented thought and speech as body-transcending activities (Murray, 2003). He was not alone. Although Lecoq's work was in accordance with the theories of his equally controversial compatriot Merleau-Ponty, he was primarily a teacher, not a director or professor of theatre. Unlike his French contemporaries for whom language was practically at the heart of their national identity, Lecoq wrote very little about his vision or philosophy, mainly due to how much his techniques and methods are truly only comprehensible through practice and experience (Murray, 2003, p. 6).

In the world of contemporary theatre practice, Lecoq's School and training are relatively well known. Founded on the notion that “the body knows things about which the mind is ignorant,” Lecoq’s pedagogy privileges the somatic impulse over the mind in meaning-making processes (Lecoq 2000, p. 9; Callery, 2001, p.4). Lecoq’s career in the human sciences as a physiotherapist treating patients with reduced corporeal movement greatly informed this perspective on learning. He would recall early in his practice witnessing one particular patient with physical disability, determinately reorganize motor function in an effort to relearn and self-rehabilitate paraplegic movement.<sup>70</sup> These observations would go on to inform his artistic work.

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<sup>70</sup> In the foreword to *The Moving Body*, British Director and Lecoq alumnus Simon McBurney writes on the trajectory of Lecoq’s humble beginnings as a young physiotherapist after the Second World War, “Lecoq was a man of vision”. See Lecoq 2000 p. ix

As far back as the 1950s, Lecoq's applied practice was considered a fairly unique approach to theatre training, even then garnering indefinable descriptors such as: “*physical theatre, movement theatre, body-based theatre, visual performance*” and even “*modern mime*” (Murray, 2003, 2-3 original italics). Grounded in provocative corporeal exploration, the Lecoq method is not so much a formula or design to follow, as it is a working method of which he explained: “[W]hat students do with it is up to them” (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, p. 4). Essentially this implies that each individual who trains at his School imbues his or her own “nature of self,” be it idiosyncratic, genetic, and/or culturally formed (p. 11).

Indeed, the process of examining self through the body in space hinges on intuitiveness. Hence, Lecoq strategically integrates intuition as a fundamental element into his teaching. He believed intuition empowers the student actor to discover his or her own style, rather than imposing one from the outside (Bradby, 2006, p. xii). Lecoq's analyses observe that the geometry of the physical body's movement in space directly correlates with human behaviour and emotion; that is, the heightening of sensory awareness and movement frame a discovery of self in terms of the individual's grasp of real-life situations in the material contexts encountered of the external world (Lecoq 2000, p. 19). By insisting on the physical realities of each situation, the intent of Lecoq's methodology was to completely bypass the psychological (Bradby, 2006, p. xv).

Prior to delving further into the poetic journey, it is necessary to clarify that Lecoq's pedagogy and the two-year program of his School, are not one in the same thing. The poetic body is certainly the overarching principle of his teaching methodology and the transposable aspect of his work that I bring to my work and designing of field studies. It is also the closest thing from which to build a theory as it resonates with numerous phenomenological and other contemporary

theoretical perspectives—theories that were not part of the School’s curriculum. It was not so much that Lecoq was anti-intellectual as he was pro-visceral, and the *tout bouge* (everything moves) mandate of his School exemplified this principle.

*The Moving Body* (2000) is the English title of the last comprehensive book that Lecoq wrote on his pedagogy, a translation from the original French, *Le Corps Poétique* (translated as “the body poetic”). The irony behind the correlative use of the word “poetry” with Lecoq’s work is that in its conventional written and/or spoken literary sense, poetry of the body has very little to do with spoken and verbal expression as it is commonly understood. More of an ontological metaphor, Lecoq appropriates the use of the word “poetic” to the body, for its ability to elicit imagery and arouse visual sensations (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

My own notes offer a useful point of entry into the central pedagogical concept of *le voyage*:

*November 26, 1990: Improvisation (avec Lecoq)—Breaking down the elements of le voyage (the journey), the body in extreme chaotic situations, e.g., avalanche down the mountain, fire in the forest, turbulent rushing river ... taking these physical movements to their extreme. Becoming both the neutral person in these elements and the elements—critique given to me by Lecoq: he truly understood (believed?) I was the fire/a woman (in the fire) both crossing the forest in danger—of advancing movement in the need and desire to get to the other side (of the space).*

Translated from the French *voyage*, in English Lecoq’s pedagogy is a “journey.” Although the English language also shares the word and meaning (albeit in a slightly different pronunciation), its Anglophone translation resonates as a much bigger and larger endeavour. In English, a voyage applies to a specific type of travel in the grandest sense of the word, as in a space odyssey or

20,000 leagues under the sea. An English “voyage” connotes an expedition into unknown terrain, exotic, precariousness, the enduring of great exertion or hardships; an outing to the cottage in northern Ontario does not usually fall under the category of a voyage.

There is a slightly more philosophical elegance to *voyage* in French, as it speaks to a *déplacement dans l'espace* (a displacement into the space). As subtle as this play on words translation may appear, it quite effectually captures the essence of Lecoq’s work. The nuance in definition from French to English is of relevant significance, and one reflective of his pedagogy as it illustrates how words function as living organisms dependent on the exploration of the double entendre, “*body of words*” used to express them (Lecoq, 2000, p.49, original italics).

The journey/*voyage* is singular in that it is situated within the historical, socio-cultural, gendered, linguistic scripts that influence how each of our bodies move, (re-)act, imitate, and permeate the living expressions of our being-in-the-world (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2006). The journey is a *return* to the foundational use of language communication expressed through poetry of movement distinguishing our unique expressions of self. There is no typical Lecoquian experience of the School, simply because there is no typical Lecoquian student. This is largely attributable to the Lecoq School’s international student body and the many different cultures, genders, ages, histories, prior knowledge and more that each student brings to the pedagogy. Thus, while my account informs my *voyage*, it does not definitively encompass or represent the many experiences of the term.

Of all the different forms in which human beings engage: internal speech, verbal communication, written signs and symbols systems—Lecoq focused on the poetic body as critical communicator of meaning and significance and he did so through the metaphor of the *voyage* (Murray, 2003). For Lecoq, thought follows movement. Inviting students to explore the

body-in-experience was meant to demonstrate how physical/visual expression contain intellectual meaning—how our bodies re-present, in the sense of to make present again, the directions of our thinking or speaking (Fusetti and Willson, 2000, p. 6). Our learning derives from the ability to see through the body-self and thus, un-learn the self of the body as a collection of parts that are separate from or subordinate to the body from the purview of the elevated mind (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 105).

Mark Johnson (2007) calls this view a common trap of the dualistic mind/body tensions, and challenges such a representational matrix. According to Johnson, in its broadest sense, representations are cognitive structures predominantly considered necessary for processes of perception, conceptualization, and reasoning. Each is set in motion through the mind's ability to generate ideas, concepts and propositions (p. 114). Language in thought, then, serves as an immensely complex process of mental representations. In addition to Mark Johnson, Antonio Damasio, George Lakoff, Shaun Gallagher, and Maxine Sheets-Johnstone all position thoughts as modes of interaction and action, and language as a modality of the human body (Gallagher, 2005, p. 107).

Lecoq's work demonstrates the theories of cognitive scientists Lakoff and Johnson, who claim, "propositional and metaphorical structures of language of thought and language are shaped by non-propositional movements and movement patterns of the body" (Johnson, 1987; Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Gallagher, 2005). They add, "Implicit in this theory is the idea that thought occurs after movement [...] the body's impressions and imitations give way to thought" (Felner, 1985 p.148). The practice-based methods of Lecoq's pedagogy demonstrate how the body is both *in* and *of* experiences before they are descriptive, representations *about* the world (Johnson, 2003, p. 117). The pedagogy attempts to return the learner to the level of

cognition and gesture, to a state that precedes words (Merleau-Ponty, 1967/2006; Felner, 1985, p. 150). In its original performance context, this helps the student-actor in the act of characterizing a role to recognize their kinetic idiosyncrasies *before* they are able to transform them creatively.

I see a parallel here with the process of learning of a new language. The newcomer arrives with an accumulation of embodied knowledge stored within his or her body-of-origin—a corporeal knowing that engages with the unfamiliarity of the host country. An exchange occurs in this transaction, in this *espace du moment précédent*. In this *espace*, a presence or awareness of the body in thinking movement occurs, a learning step before immersion into the new language for interaction. It is not easy, of course, not on a practical, philosophical or pedagogical level. Yet Lecoq's work addresses these difficulties and proposes some hypotheses I will take further in my own approach.

### **The Neutral Mask: Objects of Learning/Learning Objects**

When writing about the act of expression, John Dewey (1934) claimed: “Because objects of art are expressive, they are language” (p. 106). Objects of learning and learning objects are terms often associated with the applied sciences and technology, typically in reference to a combination of content, practice and assessment items—and often directed toward a single learning objective. Donald Winnicott (1996) coined the phrase ‘transitional object’ to identify the infant’s development as it shifts the primordial, internal object relationship with the mother by attributing special value to a genuine (cloth or toy) object-relationship. Art objects, as pedagogical tools, have long been the pathways for experiential practice in education. We can find traces of learning, transitional, and art object theory in the NM as its evocative, corporeal narrations trouble the language-to-body relationship of my research. However, the development

and use of the object—the mask itself—has no historical connection to object-relations theory of psychoanalytic psychology.

I look to the Neutral Mask as a way to bridge the body-of-cultural<sup>71</sup> origin in meaning-making narratives of the dominant language learning practice for newcomer settlement. It allows me to explore the performance of English language through the interpretive interlocution of expressive masking technique. More generally, and following Sherry Turkle's (2007) notion that “an object serves as a marker,” I see the neutral mask as a means to provoke the *assemblage* of social formations *qui rempli* (that fill up or fulfill) the body, in the sense of bringing it into being (p. 5). The art product is of self-expression because the self assimilates the material—in this case the neutrality of the mask (Dewey, 1934, p. 107). Consequently, the body-in-the-mask is a process of transposing what sight and sound contribute to, and relies upon, in the transmission of verbal speech, into interpretive movement. The neutral mask thresholds a crossing from language-of-origin, to silence, to new language learning, to, as Turkle writes, “catalyze self-creation” (p.9). Herein lays the objective of the evocative object of the neutral mask.

In my own notes, I recount one of the foundational mask exercises that Lecoq calls ‘The Fundamental Journey’. It is a solo exercise where students, on their own time, enact his or her journey in the larger collective of sharing the same spaces.

*November 12, 1990: Improvisation (Lecoq)—Neutral Mask. Theme: asleep you awaken in a fog, as you stand up you feel yourself in the thickness of the fog, you advance forward until you come to a clearing where the air is fresh, bright sunshine, the sea is in front of you. You get this overwhelming desire to throw (skip) a stone into the sea. End of scene.*

*Tips from Lecoq, be precise with your rhythms, don't slip into predictable (representative)*

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<sup>71</sup> In talking about the body of a youth who is newly arrived in Canada as the ‘the body-of-cultural origin’, I am trying to highlight that this body remains rooted in its culture of origin. This is an embodied phenomenon that continues to have significant impact on how newcomer youth experience ELL.

*patterns like arm movements pushing away fog. The awake is a surprise of one kind into the clearing of the sun-filled other. My critique (from Lecoq): Body movements looked a little timid which prohibited the want or need to move forward (a contradiction in the body). After the stone throw, my body was left in a contorted position, which could be difficult to resolve—seek economy of movement (clean physical lines).*

In the early 1950's, Lecoq, together with fellow artist and colleague Ameleto Sartori, designed the NM. Its greatest attribute is in developing awareness of one's own body by essentially disrupting social and cultural patterns, learned behaviour, and personal habits that have evolved the body and encumbered (i.e. limited) its definition too. The wearing of the mask encourages the wearer to search for pure simplicity of an economical 'de-cluttering' of movement—to "unknow" what helps us know based on the movements made in our world (Murray, 2003, p. 73).

In many ways, the *Ko-Omote*,<sup>72</sup> a prominent mask of the Japanese Noh theatre repertoire greatly influenced the creation of the neutral mask (Sartori, 2013). Noh's contribution to the design of the neutral mask illustrates that there were parameters that helped determine its foundation. The *Ko-Omote* mask's ability to convey an array of emotions in the stillness of its painted features inspired the neutral mask concept. Lecoq and Sartori also identified the mask by two other names that include *le masque noble* (the noble mask) and *le masque calme* (the calm mask). What Lecoq found alluring about the Noh mask was how it compelled the wearer of the mask to express emotion through the language of the body. Transposed from Noh, NM would share the same stylized aesthetic motion in the way of distinctive, elongated—*ralentissement des mouvements* (slowing of movements):

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<sup>72</sup> The full-faced *Ko-Omote* mask goes by several different names depending on the plot, simple story, or libretto used to outline plays without scripts, or *utai-bon* (chant book). See Komparu, 2005 p. 150.

Detached from your own face and words, both of which you can usually master in a social context, the body emerges as the only thing to guide you through the silence...There's no cheating with just your body. The neutral mask, which had originally allowed you to feel hidden, now exposes you. The mask that you wear in everyday life is gone, devoid of any purpose. You can feel each movement more intensely than before. You can no longer use your eyes to play psychological games and your whole head must now turn for you to look. Your gestures become bigger and slower. (Brady, 2006, p. 105)

Placed over the face, the mask essentially conceals facial nuances present in the meaning making of language expression. For example, the slight angle shift in the head initiated by a subtle tilt of the neck, could completely transform the mask's gaze. A balanced look (centered upright), can transform to one that is conniving (head slightly tilted to left side, chin down), to a look of nobility (extreme head tilt to right side, chin high in the air), and so forth. As the head/mask initiates a position, the body compliments the physical expression by amplifying the silent language through a variety of its parts, i.e. a puffed up chest, a lunge in the legs, arms akimbo. However, it is not always the head/face/mask that leads physical speech, the impetus can arrive from the abdomen, the buttocks, the big toe—each of these areas are explored through the push/pull in and of spatial movement. Its pedagogical purpose is to allow the student wearing the mask, to sense their physical self in knowing processes accrued through the doing (movement) of *being* the body. Additionally, the mask shares Noh's fundamental "self and other/actor and audience" techniques, such as the notion of "detached vision" (Komparu, 2005, p. 16). Detached in this context is not intended to mean an objectified, remote sense, instead it is a quest to achieve a "self view" or perspective of the subjective body-self from his/her own eyes (Komparu, 2005, p. 16).

Another method of explaining this concept is Dewey's "triadic relation" (p. 106). Dewey claimed the defining feature that completes an external object/product of art is threefold: 1) The relationship between the artist and his/her art once it leaves their creation; 2) How the work of art is embraced/received by the outside world during outside the artist's possession; 3) How that reception returns to the artist. Similarly, the optical illusion of the mask, when worn, projects an outward view that then bounces back to the mask to objectify the visually perceived information to the wearer. This can sound like a hallucinatory out-of-body experience to the individual wearing the mask. It is not. In an interview with Alan Levy (1978), Lecoq described the NM sensation as:

The minute you put on a mask that covers the whole head, you are transformed. Your own person ceases in that instant and you are what happens. We all communicate with our faces, mouths, eyes, the way we hold our heads, the lines that are etched into our skins. With the mask, you have no past, no race—except what the mask portrays [...] It forces you to act with your body – and the body doesn't lie. (p. 50)

Here, Lecoq speaks to how human beings "mask" themselves in and through reproduced movement (of which theatre-actors heighten and embellish for performance). Second, Lecoq reveals how the mask, as a salvaged artifact, was not a covering worn to disguise the face, but as a means to identify the whole body (Eldredge, 1996). For example, ritualistic tribal body paintings or markings emphasize and bring the physical structure to life. Of these representations what remains are the cultural markings in the form of skeletal and bone structure in the face/body shape, size, and skin colour. With the NM, the object is the facemask, is typically associated with performance. It is also completely dependent on human contact to make it functions.

The NM, then, is primarily an actors' training technique used to heighten physical awareness—a gentle exercise into the exploration of new things or states. Conceived as a pedagogical tool to provoke the journey *into* the poetic body, the mask also doubles as a method to assist an actor when encountering an obstacle that can impede progress in their work. It is worth noting that the mask is not a technique to master, in the sense of acquiring complete knowledge. Its process of learning is ongoing (Chamberlain and Yarrow, p.29). Furthermore, although the mask helps an actor embody performance, its intent is not *for* performance. A Neutral Mask asks of whoever dons them to be willing to surrender to the experience of movement outside the mind's direction—a return to the dynamic energy of feeling one's physical habits as expressed through their body. This is a sensorial reawakening attuned to what Lecoq describes as a universal<sup>73</sup> language of the “speaking body,” a necessary foundation to explore individual form for creative expression (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, p.68). In experiencing the surroundings of their external world, students learn to become attentively receptive to the inner conflicts and/or complicities that arise as they move toward shared interests, mutual understanding and common ground (Lecoq, 2000, p.36). Lecoq alumni Ron East writes:

The neutral mask has been devised to establish a foundation for the creative theatrical experience. The mask is sculpted to be simply the human being at the moment of change through discovery. It is intended as a metaphor. The purpose is to permit the mask to come to life, to be animated, by a process of identification. (East, 2008)

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<sup>73</sup> When Lecoq says ‘universal’, he refers to theatre’s ‘universal human needs’, ‘universal laws’, ‘universal language’. He is acknowledging on the one hand, the traditions and historical conventions upon which his teaching is based...of a dramatic landscape constructed upon common principles – and also what Lecoq’s works necessitates as ‘driving motors’ – which have an ethical preoccupation with the power of theatre to break down barriers, to act as a unifying force. Four points of universal communication developed by the physical theatre company (and Lecoq graduates) Mummerschanz, include: 1) Human movement has the potential to communicate itself universally. 2) It is possible to find, or create, a fundamental language of theatre that can be understood anywhere. 3) Certain emotions and gestures have the power to be understood universally. 4) An instinct, or disposition, for play is a phenomenon that exists across different cultures. See Simon Murray (2003).

Likened to a body cleansing, or rebalancing, Lecoq's neutral mask technique also attempts to bring the student back to the experiencing of *experience* for the first time. By concealing the face, the neutral mask also un-masks the wearer of the faces we adopt (Lecoq, 2000). By shifting the focus from a cognitive emphasis of shared sub- and un-conscious thinking, required of verbal language or subtleties of facial grimacing, the mask diverts attention to the body. It replaces the voice, ears, and face. Six NM characteristics, which unite in discovery of the neutral body, are as follows:

1. Symmetry
2. Centredness
3. Integration and Focus
4. Energy
5. Relaxation
6. Being, or Presence (i.e., not Doing) (Eldredge, 1996, p.53)

The key to mobilizing the mask lies in the design. Its facial construction offers no defining life expression or recognizable characteristics. "It" does not laugh or cry, nor is it sad or happy. It simply emits a sense of calmness and balanced emotions—neutrality. At its essence, the neutral mask is used to create awareness for the actor (or in this case of my research, as I will show, the ELL student) of the physical space around him or her, and more importantly her or his place *in* the space, outside of socially represented identifications. In its economy of movement and detailed precision, the mask commands *disponibilité*. Unable to hide behind "attention-catching expressions of the face" or the psychologically masked mechanics of the brain, the body forcibly "sticks out," and all its awkwardness is revealed (Frost and Yarrow, 2007, p.107).

Thus, Lecoq used the nonnegotiable mask movements as a tool to expose unique physical characteristics. Verbal explanation is not necessary as the mask quickly dictates the clear interpretations of movements and gestures versus those, often idiosyncratic in nature, which cannot (Hayden, 1991/1992, p.19). Through trial and error, students begin to explore commonalities of shared movement, those that the balanced features of the mask will accept and resonate with others, and those elements of body language that communicate cross-culturally. As the NM is never able to communicate face to face with another mask, observation and awareness serve to intensify a focus instead on how the individual body ‘speaks’ as it moves (Frost and Yarrow, 2007, p.86). In an acting class/theatre context, the use of the mask object is to understand as performance, but not as a way of performing (Murray, 203, p. 72).

Similar to the moving body/*corps poetique* title of Lecoq’s book, “neutral” as used as an adjective in English, loses some of its poetic quality in the language translation. In English, “neutral” has both a pejorative and self-centeredness quality to it. How can one be neutral? Moreover, how ambitiously impossible is it to think that it *is* possible. As living human subjects that think, feel, and engage with/in life, our identities are identified and determined by self and others—the colour of our skin, social structures of gender, the names that people call and recognize us by, and so forth. Suspending this information is exactly what Lecoq intended with this mask, yet in English, it appears to be reduced to mere neutrality.

This expressionless, *nonpsychological* mask creates a barrier between the student and his or her inner self. “Neutral,” Lecoq explains, “does not mean absent.” He adds:

It means without a past, open, ready. One cannot act psychologically because the eye does not travel. The head replaces the eye. As the eye represents the inner man, the neutral mask deflects the emphasis from the eye, which is only barely visible, and places it instead on the

movement of the head, which is more generalized and less psychologically oriented.

(Felner in conversation with Lecoq, 1971, italic added)

At its most fundamental level, then, the neutral mask is the awakening of somatic and sensorial awareness to the self *as* a self in the space of the learning experience (Murray, 2003, p.75). The mask invites the student to journey back to the “point of departure” –to *un-know* or rather *know anew* through gesture and movement (Rolfe, 1977, p. 19). Given that the NM features possesses no psychology or biography it, in many ways, rejects the imposition of movement forced upon it, as well as the effects of language itself—what I turn to next (Murray, 2003, p. 73).

### ***La Langue Lecoq*** (The Language of Lecoq)

Detailed class directives at the Lecoq School were practically nonexistent in the first of the two-year program. This was intentional. Lecoq knew that each of us would uniquely interpret the exercises drawing from our equally unique life reservoir. For example, in one particular exercise, the instruction called for five or more people to arrive at a location where there is a park bench: “Vas-y!” (Go ahead! – or begin).

*October 22, 1990: Scene Study (Lecoq) without words. On a park bench, five or more people gather. Each enter individually and feels the others space, reacts to it accordingly. It's all about timing. Three people, two on one side, one on opposite side, commence walking towards one another. One recognizes a person giving the impression (in silence) that they recognize another. Continue with this simplicity of the scene, no pushing or pulling of forced gazes, and no underlying theme or story line. Those designated, play the beats of recognition.*

At the Lecoq School, the spoken word is practically nonexistent in the first of the two-year program. Writing on Lecoq's training Rick Kemp (2012) articulates that the School "offers the student a way of defining, naming, and working on the components of physical expression" (p. 81). A transient learning space founded on movement analysis, the notion of silence is explored to when, according to Lecoq, the quiet gives way and *la parole* (spoken words of verbal language) become necessary. The School teaches the timing of silence as well as rhythm, syntax, breath control and so forth just as those found in the lessons of voice and speech. Taught through a learning of listening in/to the sensible (sensitive) space of feeling and *unknowing*, Lecoq's analyses observe how the silent body in experience of movement has direct correlation to human behavior and emotion.

Due to the temporary relinquish of spoken language, Lecoq instructs a sensorial based awareness from which to discover the body in terms of one's individual grasp of real life situations in relation to material contexts encountered of the external world (Lecoq, 2000, p. 19). What the body sees, touches or hears in a heightened "sense experience" concretizes innate knowingness through the immediacy of physical realities. One cannot dispute the truth of the body engaged in the experience of sense experience. As the body experiences these sensations, it begins to perceive a relation to that which it sees, touches, and hears. This, a strategy Lecoq employs to intentionally bypass the complexities of a psychological knowing by demonstrating how the outside meets the inside (Bradby, 2006, p. xv). The intent of Lecoq's pedagogy was not to abolish thinking and speaking, but to prepare the student actor to bring to his or her craft the life connection as only each one's individuality of life experiences could afford. The performance of an actor does not work in thinking about the performance, but rather, through the

body engaged in the activity of performance—a perspective that directly resonates with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the body as the vehicle for being in the world.

Lecoq believed the neutral mask was the cornerstone of his physical theatre pedagogy, the starting point from which all other learning extends. As preparation for “a body-in-life,” the impartiality of the mask’s neutral features unites all people as living entities and allows us to see ourselves in it equally (Barba and Savarese, 1991, p.54; Bradby 2006, p. 105). According to Lecoq, in the verbal silence of the mask, physical habits as “fixed notations” provide a substructure for the student to begin exploring body self-dimension, this is the autobiographical self (Bradby, p. 105). The encounter of and in the mask aims to return the student to the experience of the body in the act of experiencing.

Lecoq argues that the removal of the subtle yet intricate communications of facial gestures isolates the body to a more neutral starting point, which in turn frees or suspends restrictions placed upon it. In de-emphasizing the psychological (and linguistic) dimensions to performance, the body returns to a “blank page” or a *pre-autobiographical* self-narrative from which to examine the collection of factual substances that contribute toward building extended consciousness and consequently, the autobiographical self (Lecoq, 2000, p. 36).

That said, there are two key aspects of neutral mask work that need further investigation: first, what does finding neutrality mean, and second, how does the wearing of the mask impact the actor in other ways? The impossibility of neutral behaviour is the very first discovery one makes, followed by the accompanying improbability of sustaining anything resembling neutrality for any length of time (Frost and Yarrow, 1990/2007, p. 156). A full-face cover, the neutral mask is literally void of a mouth and therefore incapable of verbal expression<sup>74</sup> (see Fig. 3:1, *Neutral*

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<sup>74</sup> Often there is a cavity constructed parallel with the placement of the mouth area from which the actor can breathe. The tradition of full masks, otherwise known as tragic masks, does not permit vocal sound and verbal speech. See Eldredge (1996).

*Mask*). This feature effectively reduces psychological narratives (typical in other masks) so that the body's movements and activities become the complete focus and in essence, replace the face and voice.<sup>75</sup>

John Haviland (2000) writes, “There are many evolutionary connections between speech and gesture, since language has evolved in the context of face-to-face interlocutors” (p. 16). Merging the practice of neutral mask with neuroscientific theory (as in Damasio’s theoretical orientation) exposes further issues, such as the appearance of emotional narratives—a prominent aspect of Damasio’s extending values, which happened in my experience, and indeed is not uncommon to neutral mask work. Emotion does surface, resulting from the body in the experience of the mask; it is often elicited by being in the mask. Yet this need not imply a therapeutic analysis of personal “self” in the psychoanalytic sense. I am not suggesting that there is no interplay between mind and body emotion; I believe they are mutually interactive. Rather what I mean here is that the emotions conjured up are not primarily from the mind’s memory, as relied upon in explorations of drama therapy, expressive arts therapy, psychodrama, or any other form of psychological work. Instead, the expressed emotions I am referring to are *sensorially* generated emotions, pre-set in the biology of the body and not induced by external causes (Damasio, 1999, p. 57).<sup>76</sup>

### **Démystifier: Reculer pour Mieux Sauter**

True to French witticism and their love of wordplay, *reculer pour mieux sauter* (take a step back in order to jump forward) is a colourful French proverb used to suggest that perspective

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<sup>75</sup> Although physical gestures such as a pointing finger or hand imitating a gun are indicative of language and imagery, they do not necessarily engage a psychological narrative.

<sup>76</sup> The body releases emotion through the act of crying pertaining to a secretomotor phenomenon. Complex psychological theories on crying and why humans cry relate emotion to varying degrees of a sense of feeling helpless, whereas the biology of medical diagnoses relate the non-emotional shedding of tears to lacrimation of the lacrimal gland (tear duct). See Frey (1985).

(backward step) will help offer a better view in a delicate situation (to then know how to proceed).<sup>77</sup> Although Lecoq did not use this particular phrase in the instruction of his pedagogy, I felt the idiom offers a visual point of reference to situate the demystification exercise. ‘Démystifier’, in French, shares the same English definition, meaning to *make* less mysterious or clarify. Lecoq used the word *demystifier* as a way to get students to break down or demystify complex thought and language processes that can inhibit movement in order to find physical equivalents that could express the same sentiments.

Lecoq based the process of demystification on *les permanences* (the permanent elements<sup>78</sup>), as a way to examine and make less mysterious or obscure corporeal metaphors, metaphors that reflect and represent performative, sociocultural movement. For example, the sea is horizontal, a tree is vertical, and the edge of a cliff and/or base of a mountain (pending perspective) could represent height, a canyon depth and so forth. These directional dynamics become the basis from which to evoke movement and to examine corporeal syntax. Therefore, finding the horizontal line of the sea in the body is not the same as the horizontal flatness of the prairies. Working with elements in this manner initiates aesthetic body language as a way of sculpting physical vocabulary that interprets the world through the sensorial and outside concrete rationality. The elements progress to materials (e.g., steel, wood, gold), passions (e.g., love, envy, greed), colours (e.g., red, green, yellow), animals/insects (e.g., lion, cockroach). These are all, for the most part, familiar enough life references that enable students to share a common ground. Yet these are not humans *in the experience* of being red or green, in love, playing a lion, and so forth. Rather, comprehension is a process of finding the sense impressions, through rhythm, movement, and space.

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<sup>77</sup> The expression also implies how the cautionary sidestepping of a blunder can lead to the encounter of an even larger one.

<sup>78</sup> I elaborate further on these concepts in the forthcoming geometry of movement section.

It is this aspect of the poetic body, and the pliancy it offers to an alternative method in learning language that enables me to consider Lecoq's pedagogy beyond its lifeworld of the theatrical stage and apply it a new context of newcomer youth settlement programming in language learning. This is not merely a matter of relocating purpose and intent from a performing arts focus to one of the mainstream classroom. Nor does it consist of replacing the learner from one of a theatre student to that of the newcomer student. Instead, the features of Lecoq's work that offer pedagogical sustenance beyond theatre, his school, and the training of his methods, is how the pedagogy ultimately arises from the individual. The training relies upon the uniqueness of expression accessed and journeyed by the learner *through* his/her equally unique instrument of the body where, for example, "my tree will not be the same as your tree," because I have been through a different life, and this is what is in my body (Fusetti and Willson, 2000).

As I noted earlier, Lecoq's pedagogy resembles a working backwards, a reversion of sorts in an attempt to demystify "ready-made" ideas influenced by social conditioning (Murray, 2003, p. 72). This example of working backwards is not part of Jacques Lecoq's pedagogy, nor is it part of Murray's critical terminology. I introduce this temporal understanding to offer the reader some *point de repère* (point of reference), and to get a sense of what the applied course instruction looked like and could like in an ELL context. Transposing this exercise to ELL is not to imply a forgetting<sup>79</sup> or erasure of one's history, past, or rewriting of experience, nor for the development of performance acting, pretend, or make-believe. Drawing from our day-to-day living, the concept of demystifying is a silent exploration into "non-psychological" movements regarded as primary building blocks in the Lecoq technique of body language development (Felner, 1985, p. 161). Demystifying resembles a physical analysis of how each of us moves in our daily lives. The attention is purposely directed to the everyday motions of our life where, it is

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<sup>79</sup> In contrast, with Mira Felner who does refer to it as a "forgetting process" See Felner, 1987, p. 157.

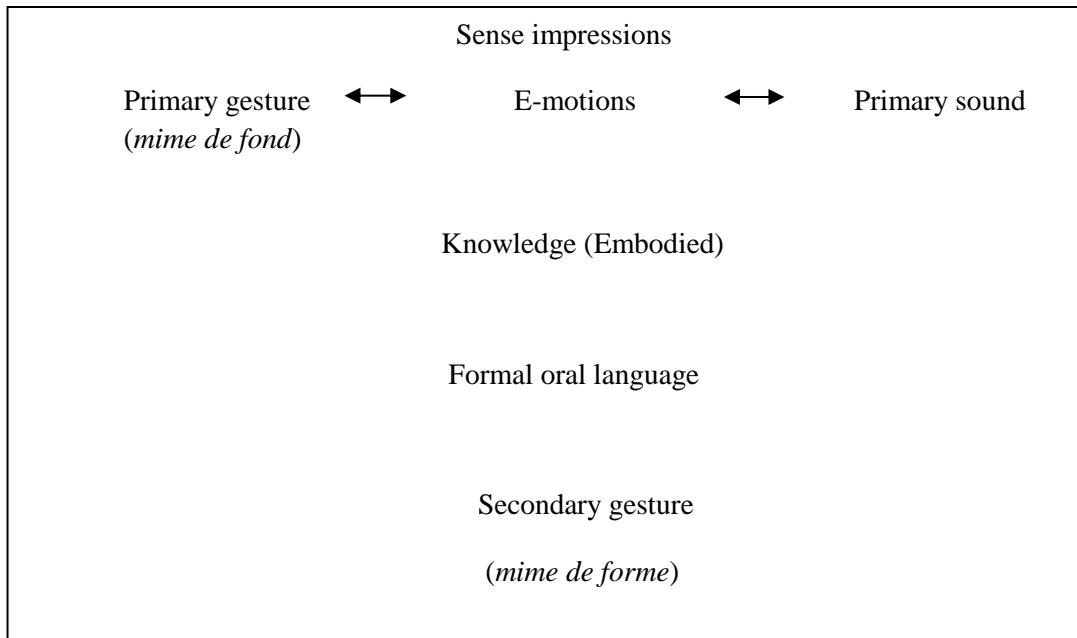
believed, kinetic repetition has formed meaning—the thinking movement of “kinetic intelligence” (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999). The working backwards part of the process is exactly that—a method that begins by surrendering the pre-eminence of verbal speech and gradually moves in the opposite direction. As the voice becomes stilled, the prominence of what Lev Vygotsky (1962) called “thought speech”<sup>80</sup> continues to direct or dominate the Lecoquian equivalent—physiological or codified movement (Vygotsky, 1936/1962). In some respects, these preliminary steps resemble a demystification of spoken language and all the “ready-made ideas” that are encoded within it (Felner, 1985, p. 157). Without the facility of spoken language, the next step engages gestural communication, and then further away from language resides movement, until we arrive at the impulse, which may or may not have relationship with tangible reality. In other words, the *élan* or impetus evoked through felt bodily sense—what physical anthropology refers to as the “tactile-kinaesthetic corps engage”<sup>81</sup> (Felner, 1985, p. 154; Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p. 417). Felner (1985) imagines Lecoq’s work as divided into two categories of movement here denotative and connotative<sup>82</sup>—the former precedes language and the latter emulates gestural expression accompaniment to language (p. 153). At the Lecoq School, the explorations of movements derive from pantomime and mime respectively.

Mira Felner (1985) created a graph that attempts to illustrate a top-down mimetic body-to-language analysis of Lecoq’s work.

<sup>80</sup> In the early twentieth century, Lev Vygotsky claimed that in ontogenetic child development, thought and speech have different roots: speech has a pre-intellectual stage and thought a pre-linguistic stage. In cognition, they develop independent of one another until eventually they converge through egocentric speech and inner speech where thought eventually becomes verbal and speech rational. See Vygotsky (1936/1962) MIT Press

<sup>81</sup> This *élan* sets in motion Johnsons’ putting of the body back into to the mind by revisioning experience through motion, senses and impulse.

<sup>82</sup> Felner’s interpretation of Lecoq’s language, understood as new post-structuralism, draws from primatologist Alison Jolly’s “pure intention movements” (p. 152). Jolly describes the physical performance of expression pre-ritualized or before recognition as represented movement. Notions no doubt borrowed from Roland Barthes (1915-1980). Felner also engages semiologist Georges Mounin’s “clear separation...between denotative and connotative meaning. Pantomime licensed and sought after the totally social and totally transparent gesture, which in its value as gesture would be common to all members of the same socio-cultural community.” Felner also makes a contrastive association between stereotypes of pantomime to Carl Jung’s concept of archetypes: “Jung believes that Figure 1. Graph of Lecoq’s Mime de fond – Mime de forme. In Mira Felner’s (1985) *Apostles of Silence* there is material in the subconscious of man that links him to other men regardless of time or culture; the subconscious symbols would precede culture and be common to all, regardless of social context.” (p. 153). These symbols Felner describes as connotative in structure. See Felner, 1985.



The process begins with sensorial impressions and lays out steps that descend accordingly. Each step establishes aspects that both comprise and reflect physical figures of speech, in the way of body gestures, postures, and poses of codified physical linguistics. Felner identifies these performative registers also known as symbolic gestures as secondary gestures or *mime de forme*. The chart, then, provides a simplified outline (in written language) of more complicated practice-based methods, and in so doing, provides a helpful way of thinking about the nature of Lecoq's work in which the principles of his pedagogy lie in the active doing.

I have modified Felner's graph slightly from its original theatre performance context to include the bracketed embodied emphasis after the Knowledge phase (p. 151). Unlike their common definitions, Felner's writing recognizes emotion, knowledge and language differently. For example, the French *émouvoir* translated in English as "emotions" is used more in the sense of "to stir up," as in a biological reaction, rather than a psychological expression. Emotions in this sense lay the foundation for primary gesture and primary sound. This is where *mime de fond*

also referred to as *mime du début*, or mime of the beginning begins gestural exploration or physical miming<sup>83</sup> before spoken/oral language (Lecoq, 2000, p. 137). Primary gesture as *mime du début* or ‘mime of the beginning’ is movement that precedes emotion, knowledge, and oral language. However, it cannot remain in this state, as our bodies are social organisms that live in a social world (Lakoff, 1999). As the graph suggests, *mime de fond* is to inform (embodied) knowledge, in preparation for spoken language. What becomes evident in this process, and rather quickly, is the point where the simplicity of pared down language and its corporal impression equivalent no longer share a modicum of comprehensibility across culture, class and gender (Rolfe, 1977, p. 15; Felner, 1985, p. 151). Here, a common understanding ceases, as in a shared repertory of symbolic gestures, pantomimic tropes or short-cuts if you will, of verbal language substitutions, i.e. a shrug, a wink, a thumb up, and so forth (see mime-terminology outlined in ‘On Mime Dimension’ of the Language section). Emulating the working-backwards process, *mime de fond* and *mime de forme* (bottom of the graph under ‘secondary gesture), are two sets of gestural systems that occur at different points of time.

Due to our naturalized tendency to believe in thinking as speaking, the difficulty in the demystification exercise arrives in the first few steps backward. In this regard, and contrary to Sheets-Johnstone’s “thinking movement”, the “working backwards” exercise does not preclude a thinking process. Notable educationalist John Dewey (1910/1997) wrote on the liberal usage of the words “thought” and “thinking,” concluding that everything that “goes through our heads” is a form of thinking (p.1). I do not believe Lecoq’s work would oppose Dewey’s claim so much as it would pay attention to the degree or possibility of *non-thinking*, or rather, the automaticity of

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<sup>83</sup> Bradby reminds us, historically, Aristotle wrote, “man is, of all human animals, the one most drawn to mime and it is through miming that he acquires all his knowledge”. See Bradby 2006, p. 4.

the socially and intellectually influenced thinking that goes through our heads (Felner, 1985, p. 149).

In other words, Lecoq's pedagogy as an applied methodology seeks to demonstrate how movements of the body help create the narrative space—and not merely in-service of the mind's thinking. As embodied, social beings, however, we are not moving in isolation, nor are our movements solipsistic in nature (Gallagher, 2005, p. 107). In "The Body as Expression and Speech," Merleau-Ponty (1962) writes, "The problem of the world, and to begin with, that of one's own body, consists in the fact that *it is all there* (p. 230 original italics). Naturally, the demystifying/working backwards exercise, challenges the student by virtue of *being-in-the-world*. This was essentially Lecoq's intent and purpose—to awaken awareness through *feeling* the tensions it poses in the instrument of the body.

I found Michael Polanyi's (1958) magnum opus *Personal Knowledge* particularly effective in helping me better articulate what Lecoq was essentially referring to as a body knowing or body's ability to possess knowledge. For Lecoq, this was an innate understanding that escapes knowing (*échappe savoir*) or knowledge (*connaissance*) in the sense of logic and reason, but of a kind that reveals itself through practice, living, experience— influenced and enhanced through socialization.

## **Tacit and Body Knowledge**

The dictionary definition describes 'tacit' as "not openly expressed or stated, but implied; understood, inferred,"<sup>84</sup> to which Michael Polanyi (1966) would later correlate his theory of tacit knowledge with the phrase, "We know more than we can tell" (p. 4). Stated otherwise, it is

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<sup>84</sup> See on-line Oxford English Dictionary <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/view/Entry/196904?redirectedFrom=tacit#eid>

extremely difficult, if not virtually impossible, to suspend understanding from the feeling of understanding something. Designating the body as the tacit receiver, Polanyi wrote:

Our body is the only assembly of things known almost exclusively by relying on our awareness of them for attending to something else [...] Every time we make sense of the world, we rely on our tacit knowledge of impacts made by the world on our body and the complex responses on our body to these impacts. (1969, p. 147-48)

As human beings, we are constantly absorbing an abundance of sensorial information. A biological compression of necessary information occurs in the way of what we absorb, and/or necessary in/for any given moment (Davis, Sumara, Luce-Kapler, 2000). Furthermore, human interaction involves far more than the scope of words that are spoken (Polanyi, 1966, p. 25). Polanyi's concept of tacit knowledge relies on an element called "from to"; perception is directed outward away *from* the body *to* something—how we retrieve, or bring in information (p. 4).

Essentially, this was the thinking behind the design of the NM. A full-faced mask placed over the entirety of the face, Lecoq used it to experience movement, not intellectually, but rather as it was "primally experienced" (Felner, 1985, p. 153).<sup>85</sup> He recognized how difficult the wanderings of the mind can impede movement for the student *in* the demystifying exercise—judging, censoring, and editing the physical impulse (which essentially reinforces the dominance of the thinking mind). Light as a metaphor can help describe the mask's function. When refracted light (or sound for that matter) passes from one medium to another it bends back in the light, altering its direction as result of changes to the physical properties (e.g., light speed travel, incurring different processes of wavelength, fluctuation of electromagnetic spectrum determining sight and sound frequency proportions and so forth) (Downey, 2005). Monica Pagano and Laura

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<sup>85</sup> This is in keeping with McLaren who, in the context of the hidden curriculum, offers "the tacit ways in which knowledge and behaviour gets constructed, outside the usual course materials and formally scheduled lessons." See McLaren, 1998, p. 191.

Roselle's (2009) use of refraction in the context of education and pedagogical practices is similarly helpful. Speaking on refraction and experiential education, they write:

If we refer back to the light metaphor, critical thinking is the stage where the light (experience) hits the medium affecting it in some way, causing a “reaction” to the medium which triggers critical thinking that analyzes and interpreting how the light/experience has affected us. (p. 222)

With Lecoq's NM, donning the mask appears to create a mirror-like specular reflection that, similar to Polanyi's “from to” concept, assists in objectifying movement as it leaves the student, engages in the social (as expression) and reflects or refracts her or his movement back to the learner.

The ideas behind Lecoq's approach may not be new; contemporary scholars—Butler, Ellsworth, and Greene, for example—have long been theorizing these approaches. What makes Lecoq's NM distinct is the relationship with knowledge and knowing based on the miming body expressed through the NM. To understand the interventions these theories of the body are making, and how they dovetail with my analysis of Lecoq and the NM, first consider a bird's-eye view of the human body. The skull of the skeletal structure contains the head, which supports the cavity of the brain where verbal language ability is formed (though its development and processing have long been a hotly debated research issue) (Damasio, 1994; Gallagher, 2005; Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). In the three dimensions of space,<sup>86</sup> the head of the human figure resides in, gravitationally speaking, the upper axis of the skeletal structure.

The face situated at the front side of the head includes the mouth from which the sound of speech is voiced, but the face speaks a special language in and of itself (Levinas, 1961). Facial expressions contribute greatly to “innate” communicative signals—yet as human beings, we also

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<sup>86</sup> Three dimensions refer to spatial orientation of the body in the physical environment: up, down, forward, back, in out. See Goldman, 1999.

learn to suppress them as a way of not communicating information (Tecumseh Fitch, 2010, p. 25). In a social context, facial recognition is the identity's calling card, for it is the most prominent body feature of visible acknowledgement (Gallagher, 2005). Therefore, concealment of the face disrupts key visual information about how we identify ourselves and how others identify us.

The design of a periscope shares internal/external systems of messaging, albeit the entirety of the human body is a periscope that distributes functions accordingly. The prominent facial features (eyes, ears, nose) retrieve information that is then sent below to manage other systems in and for the body (e.g., hands introduce another dimension of physical contact).<sup>87</sup> These messages, internalized, are then communicated to the brain which deciphers meaning into categories, codes and symbols—the predominant one being language.

Because of the mask, one cannot rely on facial features and must locate knowledge in another physical vocabulary. Shared and reproduced movements can also mask themselves in our bodies, which the theatre-actor heightens and embellishes for performance. Some of the practical challenges that occur when the mask is placed over the face include the mask-wearer learning to silence internal thought and suspend the mind's thinking, replacing that mode of thought with the sensorial body being—or, thinking movement. Allowing movement to be at the root of one's agency, as well as the means to inform our knowing, represent the difficulty of finding oneself in the mask (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p. xv).

Wearing the mask, and being read by others while in the mask, goes against the grain of knowing—or rather, the assumption that thinking and language are the same, as in the latter evolving out of the former. Although the mechanics of highly complex brain function exceed the

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<sup>87</sup> Polanyi claims, "Our perception is effectively co-determined also by messages from the internal ear, from the muscles which keep our body and head in its position". (1969, pp. 126-127).

scope of my NM focus, the key feature of the brain-to-language link I do want to focus on is this: our ability to rationalize. Sheets-Johnstone's tongue-in-cheek remark of the thinking-language-rationality order as the "human triumvirate" here makes sense, for Kantian and Cartesian precepts have long substantiated the assumed order of human function (1999, p. 492). Plasticity in language acquisition studies are typically in relation to the brain using neuroimaging research as a way to examine how neural circuits connect with the mind for language development (Zhang & Wang, 2007). By using the NM, I also explore language-learning plasticity, albeit through the body, with movement and gesture shaping pliability. Proprioceptive awareness of movement can also act as a supplemental motor activity for language learning (Gallagher, 2005).

Thus, the objective of the NM training offers students an alternative way to understand, define, and express through the body by creating an embodied vocabulary, one that draws from their somatic experiences—the corporeal function of the cognitive process (Kemp, 2012, p. 86).<sup>88</sup> At its essence, the disruption is epistemic in nature. It does not rely solely upon shared structures of our (mental) cognitive—knowing. In recent decades, cognitive, embodied and neuroscientists have sufficient data that challenges Cartesian models, demonstrating how the body anticipates conscious experience before the mind (Gallagher, 2005, p. 237). In other words, the mind is not a brain and the brain is not the body (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p. 400).

Contrary to the widely held scriptural belief, Sheets-Johnstone argues, "in the beginning," movement preceded "the word." She writes:

The beginning is always *animate form*. We see this ontogenetically as well as phylogenetically. Newborn creatures *move* [...] Life, including human life, is in the most fundamental sense not a matter of brains or language; it is most basically a matter of

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<sup>88</sup> Writing on Jacques Lecoq in his book, *Embodied Acting: What Neuroscience tells us about performance*, Rick Kemp makes parallels between Lecoq's physical theatre training techniques and leading non-verbal scholars works such as David McNeill, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. Kemp writes "It is useful to recall Lakoff and Johnson's statement that approximately 95 percent of the brain's activity is unavailable to conscious reflection, and McNeill's observation that the processes involved in generating gestures are largely unconscious." See Kemp 2012, p. 86.

tactile-kinetic powers [...] that at some time in our remote hominid past led to the very invention of a verbal language. (1999, p. 402 original italics)

Similarly, Mark Johnson takes embodied research a step further, proposing that to reconsider how we perceive the mind, it is necessary to stop viewing it through models that continue to uphold Cartesian dichotomies. Johnson offers a new frame for epistemologists to look at the patterning of experiential interaction, “the *in* and *of* the world (rather than just being *about* the world” as processes of experience) (2007, p. 117 original italics).

Shaun Gallagher’s research on social and embodied cognition confirms Lecoq’s practical exercise of the neutral mask. Gallagher define the “neurology of shared representations,” or the intersubjective ways in which perception is neurologically exchanged (2005, p. 232). Through non-conscious mirror imitation<sup>89</sup> of stimuli in the environment, one’s body knows before one knows they “know” (p. 237). With the NMs concealing the face, the immediacy of perceptions usually formed and expressed through thought and language awaken a whole other dimension as they attune to the sensorial embodied “pre-processing” of information already present yet overshadowed (Gallagher, 2005, p. 148). It is a felt experience of the body *in* the mask. A mask without an engaged body is nothing more than a decorative wall hanging, an ornamental object (Lecoq, 2000). Without the body instructed to “live” the mask, it remains static, unable to experience in its immobility—and bodies, masked or not, need space in which to move (Perry & Medina, 2011, p. 64).

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<sup>89</sup> Gallagher describes how the body is aware of function before conscious experience using an example of reaching for a glass. The hand shapes itself accordingly – if the object were of a different size and shape, it would accommodate. “This is a general rule followed by the sensory-motor body.” p. 236

## Neutral Movement in Space

*October 6, 1990: L.E.M.<sup>90</sup> (with Krigor Belekian)—using materials to reconstruct the walk.*

*No thinking of designing, just immediately building but not incorporating the human or human being in/of the walk, only the space of the walk—the transformation of the space in which he/she walks, i.e. the vastness and openness of the plexus, the twisting of le basin du corps (the pelvis), the equilibrium and off balance-ness of the legs and walk.*

The NM offers an experience of discovering the self *in* movement and, conversely, movement in the self. This movement reveals layers of complex sociocultural-influenced physical mannerisms, idiosyncrasies, and in some instances, cluttered or unfavourable movement, carried and enacted through our bodies (Fusetti and Willson, 2002; Murray, 2003, p. 75). What becomes immediately apparent is the impossibility of achieving neutrality (Frost and Yarrow, 1990/2007, p.156).

In a metaphorical sense, wearing the neutral mask is comparable to a “blank sheet of paper” (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, p. 76). It gives the student the opportunity to return to an experience as if experiencing it for the first time. In other words, the apparent neutrality or non-linguistic expression of the mask serves to disrupt the student’s expectation of a past experience. It provides a temporary moment of suspension of prior knowledge—knowledge that is embodied in the culture of origin. In Lecoq’s training, this fresh beginning occurs at the physical reality of being, not the erasure of the mind or memory. Initially, obstacles arise from individual body habits, foundational sensorial imprints contained within (Rolfe, 1977, p. 18).

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<sup>90</sup> The Laboratoire Ecriture Mouvement or Laboratory for the Study of Movement is an adjunct to the Lecoq School, offering deeper study into the relationship between the human body and the constructed space. They are evening classes, independent of the daytime performance courses and taught by architects (one, Lecoq’s daughter who now is the Director of the School). Although there are several students from the daytime curriculum who attend (there is another fee for this class as it functions as a school on its own), many non-actors attend. The LEM pedagogy is in keeping with Lecoq’s movement philosophy—*tout bouge* (everything moves).

Often, as Rolfe argues, the search for neutral is often what it is *not*, such as “a neutral walk is neither fast nor slow, neutral stance is neither slumped nor stiff” (p.19).

Every movement starts with an impulse to move. This may seem obvious, but there is a highly complex relationship between the body’s sensorimotor activity and spatial consumption of and through movement. In its simplest form, the concept of the body in space occupies three main trajectories: horizontal, vertical, and the diagonal movement. The space between the movements of these dimensions lays neutrality, i.e., a space in which there is no distortion of these lines (Fusetti and Willson, 2000). Mobilizing neutral space begins with a focus on the universality of body movement (e.g., gross and fine motor skill activity) as it relates to dimension and direction in physical space. An intimate process, wearing the mask seeks to simplify and unpack movement to discover the social shaping of the self in space, and that self as one influenced by the patterns of relating and relationships of repetitive idiosyncratic movements.

Educational theorist Jean Piaget (1952) emphasized the importance of sensorimotor stage, a process that begins at birth and continues up to the acquisition of language.<sup>91</sup> For Piaget, the introduction of infant cognition begins with an understanding of the world through sensorial touching, feeling, and basic motor skills (grasping, sucking, stepping, and so forth). This includes the discovery between their own bodies and its relationship to their physical environment.

Spatial awareness, like air, is for the most part a function of the invisible, non-conscious, realm. As a contemporary society, it is virtually impossible to conceive of pre-Cartesian concepts of space. Henri Lefebvre (1991) would argue that Aristotle’s philosophy focused on a metaphysical understanding of the mortal world, which occupied space in ways outside the

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<sup>91</sup> Piaget’s sensorimotor is the first in four stages in cognitive development: sensorimotor (birth-18 to 24 months), preoperational (18-24 months to early childhood, age 7), concrete operational (ages 7-12), formal operational (adolescence through adulthood). See Ormrod, 2008.

concretization of logic. Space has come to dominate all senses and bodies contained within its sphere. No longer confined to a geometric meaning, there are endless capacities to the definitions of space: mental space, imaginary space, cultural space, dream space, social space, life space, and so forth (Hanawalt and Kobialka, 2000). Space produces place that both assists and invites the body movements that define them (Lefebvre, 1991).

Mark Johnson (2003) writes, “[t]here is no movement without the space we move in” (p.20), but if gesture and movement fills empty space then, correspondingly, without space there is no movement. Together, movement and space engage and sustain one another in a gravity-induced dance of equilibrium—a motivating force of movement continuum. Typically, the motivation to move is to fulfill a need or a desire. These can come in a variety of forms, such as, conscious acts (pick up and throw the stick for the dog to retrieve), biological in nature (parched mouth prompts you to get some water), or of the involuntary reflexive kind (spontaneous motion as in the blocking an unexpected attack). What these bracketed scenarios offer in the way of suggestive examples for conscious, biological, and involuntary reflexive movement, so too do they contribute to spatial meaning. The body and the action assist in locating space.

Another way to understand the neutral mask is through the geometry of movement. By this, I mean studying the structure of the body pre-language. In our everyday, the body naturally projects itself into the three dimensions of space (height, width, and depth) through positions of standing, moving, and extension of our limbs (Goldman, 1991, p.1). Patterns arise as result of the manner in which physical dimensions are repeated or restricted by certain and specific perimetrical (e.g., the border of a boundary) configurations. These patterns exist often without our awareness, so in one sense, they contain our living to certain spatial configurations—which gives new insight to the idiom “living within your means” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

Lecoq's concept of movement and space differs from these more philosophic, scientific, and mathematical hypotheses based on what he terms *le jeu*.<sup>92</sup> The literal English translation "the play" does not quite capture the full sense of its embodied meaning. Lecoq devised *le jeu* as a method to instruct the mask outside the minds objectifying perspective. The configuration of forms, contours, angles, lines, and levels help the student become aware of their moving body in space. *Le jeu* is action—and refers specifically to the body *in action* through these spatial configurations. *Le jeu* comes alive in the relationship between the body and the space in which it exists. These are spaces filled with people, objects, time, language, sight, sound and so forth. In the tension between embodied awareness that allows the space to exist for these relationships to occur, *le jeu* thrives (Fusetti and Willson, 2000). *Le jeu* initiates when the shapes and connections generated through the mask engage the body in a spatial play of movements within the three main trajectories of vertical, horizontal, diagonal lines. The *élan* behind the patterning of movements reflects the internalized inscriptions that establish our personalized ways of expression.

By turning to George Hebert's "natural method,"<sup>93</sup> Lecoq focused on 11 categories of human movement in an effort to track how mobility shapes space and contributes to meaning making. These include pulling, pushing, climbing, walking, running, jumping, lifting, carrying, attacking, defending, and swimming (Lecoq, 2000, p. 71). The body that engages in these actions will establish what Lecoq called "circuits" stored within the human body, through which emotions flow. The use of emotion here aligns with a neuroscientific perspective, which

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<sup>92</sup> 'Jeu' could be equated to the word 'energy' but Lecoq did not care for its ambiguity, or, truth be told, it's 'new agey' resonance. He sought instead to find a word that would help activate the concept. See Fusetti & Willson, 2000.

<sup>93</sup> In 1907 George Hebert devised a 'natural method' for marines under his command of physical education for the both the body and mind. Lecoq took from this and developed an exercise for first year curriculum known as the '20 Movements'. Students are asked to put twenty movements based from mime artist Etienne Decroux's *grammaire* (established with Jean-Louis Barrault). These were strict, comprehensive codes of movement and gesture succinctly exemplifying the above adjectives of Hebert's natural method. Now recognized as renowned mime movements, enabled the art form to attain autonomous status and authority. See David Brady, 2006, p. 37; Franc Chamberlaon and Ralph Yarrow, 2002, p. 44.

considers the biological function and “purpose” of emotion (Damasio, 1999, p. 54). Outside of the commonly understood meaning of emotions—induced by the mind’s reflection (memory)—Damasio classifies emotions as an indispensable feature of the organisms sensorial processing of objects and situations (p. 56). In simpler terms, emotions are part of “homeostatic regulation,” or contributing to internal mechanics of maintaining the organism’s equilibrium. They have a survivalist capacity that helps us regulate the good from the bad, to which body movements react accordingly (p. 54).

In the physical space of *la Grande Salle* at the Lecoq School, students explore Hebert’s natural method. By movement exercises, they begin to sense the performance of shapes recognized as physical patterns, patterns made and remade over time. It is not merely a process of movement; there is analysis of muscle and weight distribution necessary for the articulation of these motions. The regulation of breath control (known as “apnea haut, apnea bas”<sup>94</sup>) focuses student awareness on the remarkably instinctive flow and restraint inherent in all everyday physical movement. Stored within a catalogue of repetitive action live the emotional imprints that make up personal experience from which to grow and learn. The highly subjective nature of the work led Lecoq to reject any type of precise, formalized, or codified movement techniques, which he believed stunt and distort creative development, thereby denying the possibility of *play* and, subsequently, exploration (Murray, 2003, p.54 original italics). He also had little patience for student actor’s psychoanalytic reasoning behind the actions—these, Lecoq felt, burdened the performance of movement. Although skilled, disciplined execution is necessary, the ultimate objective of the 11 categories lies in Lecoq’s greater interest—the purity and truth behind the movement (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, p.26). Striving to uncover the real nature of an

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<sup>94</sup> Apnea is a temporary restraining of breath. ‘Haut’ in French means up and ‘bas’ means down – in breathing technique this is a holding of the breath in the chest as in sucking in a big breath of air, and dropping it down into the diaphragm. Breath retention in each of these areas will propel one to move through space in very different vertical trajectories.

action or gesture ultimately uncovered the presence and truthful purity of the self that lies within (p.26). In this sense, the exercises become a sort of kinesthetic Rorschach evaluation without the psychological assessment.

## On Mime Dimension

Legendary French mime artist Etienne Decroux was rumoured to have stated, “[w]hat Freud makes us say, mime makes us do” (Brady, 2006, p. 54). Outside the realm of traditional theatre training, Lecoq’s pedagogy tends to fall into the category of mime study, although he vociferously proclaimed his was not a mime school. He based his movement pedagogy on the premise that creative language has a physical component, recognized in the miming<sup>95</sup> body before it develops into an oral one (Aristotle, *The Poetics*, no.4).

Lecoq dismissed conventional forms of the mime clichés, such as the sad, silent, white face of the unitard-clad performer wildly gesturing and grimacing to make up for the lack of speech. Lecoq stated that mime in its truest sense “Lives in the depths of silence, where gesture does not replace words” (Bradby, 2006, p.68). To mime is to deepen the connection of meaning, to search beyond the obvious for the discovery of the unique ways in which we understand:

If I mime the sea, it is not about drawing waves in space with my hands to make it understood that it is the sea, but about grasping the various movements into my own body: feeling the most secret rhythms to make the sea come to life in me, little by little, to become the sea [...]I choose and transpose, my physical impressions. (p.69)

In *The Moving Body* (2000), Lecoq includes a glossary of technical terms that articulate the “corporeal writing” meaning of his teaching method (Miller, 2007, p. 20). Ten of these terms

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<sup>95</sup> This is miming derived from its historical Ancient Greek roots known as mimesis (to imitate) where the mimos (actor) represented through the act of physical expression. Aristotle wrote, “Man is, of all human animals, the one most drawn to mime and it is through miming that he acquires all his knowledge”. See Bradby (Ed.) p.4.

involve the word mime in some form.<sup>96</sup> *Mimage* and *mimodynamic* reference combinations like mime and image or mime and dynamic, both of which represent merely one dimension of their expressive use. Both rely heavily on personal interpretation. For example, *mimage* is the recreation of a physical and or facial gesture that provides an image of a feeling, and is not explanatory in nature or descriptive of one's state of being, but rather, "much more abstract movements which allow one to exteriorise elements which are naturally hidden in everyday behaviour" (p. 102). What I might consider a sensation of excitement or anticipation, another might find anxious or tedious; as a result, *mimage* can be a highly subjective process.

*Mimodynamic*, on the other hand, is trickier as it has "no reference point in the real world" (p.46).

To find the 'interior body' of a mime...It's about searching deep down and finding the deposit that is the result of things that we have absorbed (impression)...It's as though one side of our skin is used to connect with the exterior world and the other side to connect with our interior world. These two sides must cooperate for us to make a distinction between impression and expression, between inspiration and expiration. (Bradby, 2006, p. 112)

A *mimodynamic* process sets in motion rhythms, spaces, forces, and even the static nature of inanimate objects. These require introspection from the individual learner to best display or project their particular perspective. For example, standing at the base of the CN Tower, one can sense a "dynamic emotion" of the structure. When internalized this could produce a physical sensation such as an "upward surge" it could be empowering, induce hope, or, from the downward perspective, elicit feelings of overwhelm and powerlessness in relation to the striking

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<sup>96</sup> They include "action mime, cartoon mime, figurative mime, open mime, white/pantomime, storytelling mime, melomime, *mimage* and *mimodynamic*". Jacques Lecoq, *The Moving Body*, 2000, 164-8.

elevation and force of the concrete, metal, and sheets of glass. The key to a *mimodynamic* approach is not that of offering a figurative recreation of the structure. In the analogy of the CN Tower, that action would be simply standing tippy-toed arms stretched overhead, palms of hands clasped together as in representation of a giant needle. *Mimodynamic* as a term identifies an abstract concept and exceeds mere visual translation; it is, by contrast, the embodiment of emotion. As I will discuss below, this approach and physical vocabulary for different degrees of miming have the potential to provide the newcomer student a broader exploratory base and range from which to familiarize new words or foreign cultural customs and encourage an awareness of their physical expression (Kemp, 2012, p. 82).

### **The Moment Before: The Silence before Words as an ELL Approach**

Drawing from both Merleau-Ponty's and Lecoq's respective claims that the body is the essential expressive space from which we perceive and mediate the world, I argue that exploring *l'espace du moment précédent* (the space of the moment preceding) offers the newcomer language learner a mime-to-language process. Just as one would try on several items of clothing before selecting the one that comfortably fits best, students could "try on" new language in the space and movement of the moment before spoken language. Merleau-Ponty describes a concept of "beforeness" as the place where we meet and 'intuit "nothingness"' (p.93).<sup>97</sup> In both instances, "beforeness" and "nothingness" are the space and place<sup>98</sup>—the where, when, how and why—in which meaning is formed (Tuan, 1977). In this space, Lecoq believed, *tous est possible* (all is possible).

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<sup>97</sup> Lecoq called the same space 'neutrality'. The teaching of neutrality through neutral mask is the cornerstone of his physical theatre pedagogy. Lecoq believed *ouverture* (openness) to this space is the starting point from which all other learning extends. There has been no shortage of academic discourse on varying concepts of neutrality/nothing. In some instances, it is called oneness or a return to zero.

<sup>98</sup> Space creates place and place organizes meaning, where meaning is measured in movements of time and the movement is either directional or circular (as in repetition). See Tuan, 1977 p. 3.

I will explain this concept further using an example from a documentary (1999) on Lecoq's work by directors Jean-Noel Roy and Jean-Gabriel Carasso entitled *Les Deux Voyages de Jacques Lecoq (The Two Journeys of Jacques Lecoq)*. In one segment of archival footage, Lecoq articulates the foundation of his pedagogy—that the body knows before the mind knows—and that speech (*la parole*) often arrives too soon. Words, he explains, determine the thought or the action before the impulse or motive of the actions intent. So he argues: “That’s why we (his School) begin with silence to grasp better what we should say afterwards [...] It’s essential to recover that silence which gives rise to speech” (Lecoq, in Roy and Carasso, 1999).

This focus on “recovering the silence” is not to suggest abandoning words altogether, but rather, to emphasize the body as the starting point that releases or arrives at speech. Unfortunately, silence runs the risk of misinterpretation, construed as nothingness or simple-mindedness, where knowledge has a voice (words) and is often associated with a focused or intelligent mind. Lecoq also addressed the fleetingness of silence; the absence of verbal speech has its moment in time, too. As students of Lecoq, we were taught to sense the moment when all that has been communicated through gesture reaches its apex, and the spoken words of language need to *casse l’air* (break the air)—for the obvious reason that we do not live in a silent world.

Certainly, there are problematic aspects to applying these concepts of “nothingness” and “silence” to the mainstream ELL classroom. Yet I am drawn to the attempt to reduce language, to simplifying motivation and the intent of speech expression as a pedagogical tool. What does this mean? Liberating language from its literal orientation enriches unique meaning with physical and visual dimensions particular to the self; the miming body of the student in the neutral mask may better discover the impetus for verbal speech by resisting it at first (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, p. 34).

As a result of my experience at the Lecoq School, I believe that locating language—or perhaps relocating—meaning through self-reflective exercises that explore the miming body will foster self-reliance. In turn, these techniques can foster the unique capabilities of each student. The way in which we each “be” in our bodies is distinctly unique, so a miming-to-language approach could speak to diverse learning needs common in ELL classrooms, and do so while empowering newcomer youth in their process of Canadian settlement integration.

Twenty years since I first encountered the mask, the evocative interplay it elicits between action and verbal discourse, all governed by the unique body *in* the ‘mask,’ continues to drive my use of NM a learning process (Buckley, 2009, p.252). The body that wears the mask finds movement in accordance with its own personal experience. This is what becomes immediately obvious both to an observer watching someone in the neutral mask and to the person wearing the mask: when movement or gesture is pushed, forced, deliberate, or worse *faux* (false or not genuine). Generic movement, dependent on the body, resonates differently when uniquely expressed. That is, there are no two bodies that ‘support’ the mask equally, and here I use the verb “to support” in a literal translation of the French sense of *supporter*, meaning to endorse. Thus, there is no formulaic approach to NM methodology: Bari Rolfe (1977) explains:

In spite of the depersonalization, no two people behind the same mask, look alike or move alike...In doing simple, direct movements, devoid of personality, the mask wearer still gives an impression of being unique. (p. 21)

Language models that emphasize the spoken and written components of language learning essentially favour linguistic meaning (e.g., the meaning of words and sentences) with a presumptive implication that cultural and social influences will impart the other aspects that mobilize the living aspects of language use (Johnson, 2007, p. 8). Schools have been able to

manage and cope with the great responsibility delegated in the way of newcomer student integration by adopting this approach.

Adding another dimension to ELL, one as alternative as mask work, I foresee two prominent difficulties in proposing an embodied component to language learning in mainstream education: 1) the actual object of the mask and; 2) the limits and/or ineffectiveness of non-vocal communication. I will speak to these briefly here, but take them up in detail in the Sartori Centre for Mask and In-Class field study chapters respectively.

To speak to my first concern, the mask has centuries of theatrical usage in its favour, usage that permeates and immediately locates its object purpose and function. However, this same historical aspect is also, what works against it. Mask study dates as far back as the Neolithic period where originally, it was more of a ritualistic and ceremonial divining object to channel the gods. Well before performance and disguise purposes, masks were used in a variety of other capacities, including as decorative ornaments, healing, protection, and to shield the aristocracy (Eldredge, 1996). Inviting the object of the mask into the English language-learning environment is, in many respects, a return to the versatility of its origins. Focusing on the mask can free up movement that is contained within the body. It diverts attention away from thinking processes and the automaticity of its interdependent relationship with words. It recognizes elements of language that arise but are not yet accessible to new language learners, due to their limited English vocabulary.

The second potential difficulty of the mask's inclusion in classrooms is trickier. Language proficiency tends to be synonymous with verbal speech and words. There is an unspoken tendency that links language proficiency to intelligence, and verbal language communication surely represents the most prominent form of approved social capital. Relatedly, we tend to

assume that prior to expressing thoughts verbally, there is a process of verbal *thinking* (having spoken one too many blunders, this is also an overlooked step as in spontaneous responses). This gives the impression that speech and thought both occur before active expression. The difficulty is that movement as a mode of language (or pre-linguistic) expression, is somehow seen as “less” or inferior to verbal comprehension, and that hierarchy might make teachers suspicious of engaging with movement as a language-learning device.

There is a broader usage of paralanguage, e.g., nonverbal elements found in speech like rhythm, tempo, speed, as well as body movement, proxemics (e.g., physical spatial relationships), and gesture, all of which influence thinking and, subsequently, language. Due to the international student population at the Lecoq School, there is considerable attention given to the interpretative creativity of the many different languages and countries represented. Lecoq demonstrated how all words do not possess the same relation to the body and thus resonate differently on the stage. For example, the phrases *Je prends*, *Ich nehme*, and “I take” all reverberate at various levels in their native languages. To ‘take’ in English could imply to grab, acquire, gain, or take back, which reflects the accompanied corporeal movement and thus the learning comprehension of the word. In correlation with audible subtleties of foreign language use, Lecoq proposes how in French *le beurre* rolls off the tongue as if it is already spread, whereas the English translation “butter” implies it is still in a packet (p.49). His pedagogy hones in on two major zones of silence “before and after speech” on the stage (Lecoq, 2000, p.29). A focus that explores the taken-for-granted, invisible assumptions of these language “assistants” can help balance social, cultural and linguistic disadvantages to, in turn, empower and not inhibit newcomer youth in their ELL process (McNeill, 1992; Perry and Medina, 2011).

My own autoethnographic writing helps define the grounds from which this predominantly French-influenced theatre practice may be applied to an ELL context. Located in the English language-learning classroom it can become a somatic exploration into the social designation of the very label, “newcomer” and assist language meaning through the physical being of newcomers’ cultural identities. It can mediate the difficult relationship between the body and language, and do so in a space of negotiation and transition, slowing and shaping a process too often overlooked by the *busy-ness* of learning language and the administrative imperatives of immigration.

In conclusion, by outlining Jacques Lecoq’s pedagogy and foundational exercises, I could introduce aspects of his actors’ training that lend themselves to the building of a body supplemental process. Using my practical experience at the Lecoq School and own journey as an autoethnographic case study, I embodied in my own experience how much the focus at the Leocq School was not on words, but rather, an exploration of the physical self before words of verbal speech arrive. Lecoq’s pedagogy is comprised of methods and techniques designed to experience the body-self as *moteur* (motor) or impulse of movement for language. In this sense, discovering the movements of language are not contained or limited to the displacement of the physical body through space—the ground from which I next move to present an overview of my field research.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Research: In the field ( Sartori and ELL)

Having contextualized the work of Jacques Lecoq through autoethnography, phenomenological theories, and theories of the body and language learning, in what was essentially the first of my studies, I now want to identify my two critical field studies. These are commensurate with the two-hats of my journey—the corresponding perspectives of the theatre and academic worlds. The two field projects were carried out in the Summer and Fall of 2012 respectively. As noted earlier, the first study took place at the *Sartori Centro Maschere e Strutture Gestuali* (Centre for Mask and Gestural Structures) in the Veneto region of Italy. Here, I was one of a small group of a dozen artists, designers, and teachers who participated in a 5 week course taught by Donato Sartori. This mask masterclass was particularly significant as Donato is the son of Amleto Sartori, the artisan who collaborated with Lecoq on the initial development of the Neutral Mask in the early 1950s. The second study, took the form of a movement/mask workshop offered as a what I have termed a “supplemental” to an ELL classroom in a large school board of a major metropolis in southern Ontario.<sup>99</sup> Henceforth I will refer to them as the “Sartori study” or simply the “*Centro*” and “In-class study”.

The Sartori *Centro* is located in Abano Terme, a small city located on the outskirts of Padua in Italy’s Veneto region. The *Centro* has been facilitating international workshops for almost thirty years now. My intention in travelling there was to learn the skill of the trade from master artisan, Donato Sartori<sup>100</sup> (who continues his father’s legacy). The five weeks were

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<sup>99</sup> Adhering to the Office of Research Ethics at York University, the name of the school, board and participants remain anonymous. The educators engaged volunteered general background information to help construct a profile of their students and classroom—this was not obligatory.

<sup>100</sup> In order to minimize confusion between Sartori Father and son, all further references address Donato unless stated otherwise.

comprised of a mask design (inception-to-completion) process in the tradition of mask-making technique—particular to the artisanship of the Sartori family. Internationally the Centro is a European epicenter of mask making and ‘maskerology’ (a term coined by Donato to define the study of mask work).

The second field study took place in a mainstream high school ELL classroom. Actually, two ELL classes (from the same school) along with their respective teachers asked if they could be part of the In-class study (I will distinguish them as Teacher ‘A’ and Teacher ‘B’). I realized the teachers did not want one class to feel left out so agreed to combine the two sections to make one big one. On the first day, as a way for me to get to know the students the teachers asked each student to prepare a short memorized introduction that included their name, age, and country of origin. Through this exercise, I learned from the teachers that the two groups of students, equal male-to-female ratio, ranged between 14-17 years of age. They had arrived in Canada from countries as far away as Guinea, Brazil, China, Korea, Hungary, Somalia, Yemen, Bangladesh, and Mexico. The students’ date of arrival to Canada was as recent as three months or as long ago as four years; some came alone, some travelled with family or member/s of extended family. They had varying degrees of English-language levels, some with limited prior learning, while others were ready for mainstream classroom immersion.

In the following sections, I outline details of each location in full, recounted in the form of an autoethnographic reflective narrative. However, first I need to lay the groundwork through sections that speak to the structuring of the research, the discussion of aims and objectives and a brief history of the mask—as a mask theory helps frame and inform both studies. In contextualizing these aspects, I also address the new methodological (transposed Lecoqian) approach I explored in chapter two.

## Structuring the Research

The Sartori and In-class ‘projects’ offered a way to advance the applied practice of my mask knowledge, inform my writing with practical insight, and reflect the movement-based (body) pedagogy of my experience and research. The two studies each engage pedagogy from two contrasting perspectives: in one, I generated a vocabulary for applying my performance training-based concepts of the neutral mask to more of a comprehensive arts-based applied component for ELL curricula; in the second, I experimented with an applied practice for an ELL class in a mainstream education location.

These are not comparative research practices, but rather, two field studies that speak more to two kinds of basic knowledge or understandings needed to address the overall intended scope of the research exploration. I approach these kinds of knowledge differently because it was not sufficient simply to apply NM to an ELL class. I had to feel the process of building the NM, the literal construction, where, I came to realize that I needed an intimate understanding of the Sartori method. Furthermore, told through autoethnographic narratives, they are informed from two different perspectives—one in my participation as a student, the other in my role as a teacher.

Aware of the rather unconventional body-supplemental approach I plan to include in ELL/Settlement practices, I sought empirical data to actually mobilize and support my multi-pronged body-supplemental hypotheses. I was equally interested in discovering what works or does not work when transitioning a theatre-based technique from the performance stage to classroom curricula of mainstream education. I selected aspects of body, language, and movement to demonstrate what emerged in each field location. Consequently, each study’s data reflect these two spaces of transition and the learning that ensued. The Sartori mask field study

raises questions about pedagogical practices and the ELL study *calls* into question traditional aspects associated with pedagogical practices.

In the recounting of particular events, I share significant moments in the experience, that relate to my research questions and objectives. My writing combines layered excerpts from my field notes. These include: a stream of consciousness narrative, structured field notes recording the day's lessons, including information about mask and various construction techniques, methodological notes taken of both my observations and of my process of note-taking, and journal entries recording personal reactions, frustrations, revelations and interpretations of my fellow master-class participants working alongside me at the Sartori workshop. As such, they are informed by my perspective and attempt to understand the challenges and tensions we encountered during the workshop.

I begin each section with an unedited italicized excerpt taken from the field notes. These excerpts act as a lead-in to the rest of the self-reflective narratives that connect my personal experience in the field to the larger autobiographical story of the thesis. Recording and analyzing the activities of the master class including placing emphasis on critical moments in the process served to further my overall objectives, particularly in respect to the somewhat unorthodox presence of the mask in ELL.

### **Aims and Objectives: Differing Views, Same Theme**

The primary aim of conducting field research was to experience and analyze what two alternative approaches to embodied learning might contribute in the way of reimagining possibilities for English language-learning practice (Davis, Sumara and Luce-Kapler, 2008). My field notes—clearly a reflective account—were designed to capture both the activity of my being

a body in the mask-making experience of the Sartori workshop, and to engage the bodies of participants in the mask-movement experience of my In-class ELL study (Sheets-Johnstone, 1998; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Perry and Medina, 2011).

Contemporary qualitative pre-fieldwork processes for developing fieldwork strategies included the foreshadowing of a situation (problematic in nature) that could be ascertained (in the field) through examination or inquiry (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2009). Three research questions helped to inform the purpose and focus of each field study in order to shape the applied methods. First, I wanted to know how a modified Lecoquian process of embodied integration could improve the means of transition and integration for newcomer youth. Practically speaking this translated as me asking what my presence and modified Lecoquian-based program of study could offer students in the space of the language-learning classroom? This led to a second question: how could a *disponibilité* of the body be included in ELL educational practices. That is, would it work in concurrence with curricula, or as an adjunct to traditional methods of language learning? I needed to consider what aspects of Lecoq's pedagogy I could transpose and introduce to newcomer students and what the criteria would be that determined engagement or resistance. The final point (and perhaps the most critical of the three): how would the students come to understand and accept an embodied engagement in the space of their English language-learning classroom?

In compliance with the office of research ethics in educational settings protocol, the Sartori study and the In-class study adhere to the rules and regulations concerning access and boundaries imposed by each field locations.<sup>101</sup> I provided all the appropriate participant information, forms,

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<sup>101</sup> "The Senate of York University affirms that researchers must respect the safety, welfare, and dignity of human participants in their research and treat them equally and fairly. The University values the academic freedom of its researchers, and the ethics review process should not be used unfairly to censor researchers who support unorthodox views. However, academic freedom is complemented by the requirement to respect the

and ethics review processes necessary for the involvement of human participants, and secured confidentiality of the recorded data (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2009; Seidman, 1991, Britzman, 2008). In addition, both were overt studies, in the sense of my full disclosure *vis-à-vis* my identity and purpose to the participants in both locations. It is also worth noting, examination of the studies took place over relatively short stretches of time and therefore the data collected afforded only a section of the routine daily activities. My findings isolated a few practice-related anomalies that could contribute to a closer ethnographic observation in the way of isolating patterns to consider how my findings might or would interconnect over the course of a longer study cycle. To borrow from the Hammersley and Atkinson (2009) principles of ethnographic field study, I kept in mind that “research cannot be programmed”, and “its practice is replete with the unexpected” (Hammersley and Atkinson, p. 20). Believing that I could anticipate and/or solve any practical activity pre-context, would be a disservice to the process of the study, and to the nature of the work *vis-à-vis* the data collection I sought to gather.

### **Research into the Satori Mask Tradition: toward mainstream ELL connections**

My physical theatre artist side gave this study its due diligence by returning to the source of the mask and crediting its foundations. In doing so, I reveal that integrating a modified Lecoquian technique in mainstream education can not only affect ELL classrooms and curricula, but also alters Lecoq’s use of mask work and masking technique. Thus, the Satori field study was an important retracing of steps to explore a learning process in keeping with the origins of mask-making history and tradition. Well before mask work performance and disguise functions, it

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rights of human participants. York University acknowledges the need for continuing interpretation and refinement of applicable policies to account for changes in research methods, contexts, and cultures.” See Office of Research Ethics, York University.

occupied a range of spiritual, holistic and social purposes (Eldredge 1996).<sup>102</sup> In essence, applying the mask-object as a learning tool for English language is a return to the versatility of its origins.

Amleto Sartori (Figure 3:2) was an Italian sculptor who, in the 1950s, helped Lecoq in the designing of the first neutral mask. Many of Sartori's masks were the original masks of my training at the School in the early 1990s—their longevity testifies to his artisanship. The original NM now hangs in the *Museo Internazionale della Maschera “Amleto e Donato Sartori”* (International Mask Museum “Amleto and Donato Sartori”) in the same location as the Centro. If I was going to use the NM, I knew that I needed to understand more about its material culture.

I set out to explore the building of a NM prototype (for ELL) that could revision the mask beyond its history in theatre performance. Initially I had some unorthodox ideas, such as a redesign to resemble a half mask. In actor training, half masks are tools that assist the student-actor/performer in both in the exploration of the body and the voice. Half masks on the stage, are without a doubt a stylized performance choice, in the sense that when animated they suspend disbelief through the heightened theatrical illusion of the facial object. I knew that even considering this would radically disrupt—even destroy—the purpose of Lecoq's NM nonverbal communication purpose and intent.

In the context of an ELL class, I also questioned the colour of the mask. Typically, a completed mask remains the tan colour of the leather hide.<sup>103</sup> The more mass produced and inexpensive ones sold in theatre and/or costume shops (retailing for less than \$10), are stark white in colour—a result of the low cost plastic no doubt. Taking these masks outside of their

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<sup>102</sup> What is thought to be the oldest (recorded) stone mask is preserved at the *Musée Bible et Terre Sainte (Bible and Holy Land Museum)* in Paris. It dates back to the pre-ceramic Neolithic period of 7000 BCE. See Eldredge 1996.

<sup>103</sup> On a theatrical stage, the grooves of cheekbones, eye sockets, nose angles etc. designed in a well-made mask will accentuate and imply facial expression. As the actor moves their head these subtle angles catch the light best for audience visibility enhancing the masking technique play of the actor's performance.

original play-performance intent, such as for my ELL purposes, meant that the colour white could appear discriminatory in reproducing socio-cultural identity stereotypes. Ethnographic research understands how the observations of human experience are further influenced by the situatedness of the participants own social, cultural, and physical contexts. So my concern was that transposing light tanned/white coloured masks out of a theatre context and into the socially dynamic foreign-language classroom would reaffirm the minority students positioning (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

Finally, the original *Ko-Omote* (Noh) design of the mask was female, albeit worn by a male performer. Lecoq and Sartori's NM version saw the removal of her delicately painted features and reconfigured it by gendering the neutrality—thus producing a male and female equivalent. As paradoxical as this may sound, several practical, cultural, and theatrical reasons went into assigning masculine and feminine versions of neutrality. For instance, the overall frame of the male mask has more of a rectangular shape.<sup>104</sup> It has a noticeably broader forehead, squarer jaw line and thicker nose bridge in dramatic contrast to the females more oval, peach-like face with comparatively softer facial features implied through nuanced angles and planes. Anatomically, men have differently structured bone definition, and in most cases, they are physically larger, broader across the chest and back, and, typically, taller as well. To have a male wear the oval shaped designed mask would in fact transform their physical figure, and the imbalance in features could make them appear child-like or imply (as in reinforce) a body type. Similarly, a boxier shaped mask, when made for a more voluminous body but placed on a smaller female body, could distort the girl or woman's image; the masks' larger feature against her body would make her appear grotesquely large, even monstrous, or at least suggestively allude to a character type. Culturally, as men of the theatre Lecoq, Amleto, and Donato (son of Amleto Sartori, Figure

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<sup>104</sup> In fact, Lecoq's actual face formed the male prototype.

3:3) are also men of a certain generation, with heteronormative perspectives on *who* should play *what* on the stage. This was often a source of great debate at both Lecoq School's and the Sartori studio, and one argued from several different perspectives.

Foundationally, Lecoq and Sartori both based their work on what they called 'universalism' (as referred to on page 107). Writing on Lecoq's notion of universalism Simon Murray (2003) offers:

The philosophy underlying the neutral mask can assume controversial proportions when the quest for neutrality is tackled in a literal or absolute way. If understood and pursued literally this becomes difficult territory. Here, a questionable universalism replaces a perspective, which argues that bodies are sites inscribed by history, cultural context, personal biography and individual disposition. To attempt to erase these traces, so the argument goes, is not only ethically and ideologically undesirable, but ultimately impossible. (p.77)

Murray here speaks to a larger discussion of how flexible the lines of reason and understanding can be before they encounter resistance. In the case of the male/female body, *re-presentation* become both helpful and detrimental as it assists in conveying a universal meaning to help situate the person/character, but continues to perpetuate, paradigmatically, a/the body narrative.<sup>105</sup> I believe this is what Lecoq and Sartori encountered in designing the NM. In other words, it may be unrealistic to conceive of obliterating gender, but the learning of gender was also in direct relation to one's own gendered body and part of the NM's pedagogy. Below, I begin to outline each of the field studies independently through a series of sections that highlight impressions and pivotal moments in an attempt to help situate a practice of a body-supplemental.

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<sup>105</sup> Jacques Derrida (1978/2001), writing on Antonin Artaud's surrealist *Théâtre de la Cruauté* (Theatre of Cruelty) condoned theatre's subservience to representations of life arguing, "Theatrical art should be the primordial and privileged site of this destruction of imitation: (yet) more than any other art, it has been marked by the labor of total representation" (p. 295)

## Sartori Overview<sup>106</sup>

Acceptance to the Centro master-class is by invitation only. Sartori did not take ones interest in building a mask lightly. The process of making a mask, he would repeat many times over the course of the workshop, was an intimate one. Sartori believed it necessary to know the story of the mask in order to *find* the mask. This was meant along the lines of Michelangelo's famous statement that the sculpture is already within the marble block, and so it was up to the artist to chisel away to release it (Wallace, 2011). This was not the only reference to Michelangelo that would arise throughout the course of the weeks in Abano. Sartori was constantly integrating art history and Italian culture into the process of the work. He explained how his training began in the *bottega* style of long ago where children learned the skill of the craft from a master artisan (in this case, his father Amleto). Similar to the apprentice painters of Michelangelo's time who only once they had become skillful enough in their artwork, would they leave to make what they had learned on their own. Sartori believed that learning an arts-based craft is not scientific or based on talent. It is a trade, an apprenticeship of the learning. This was his model for running the mask master-class.

The Centro provides a multi-disciplinary research study divided into three areas of mask research, building, and mask play as a comprehensive site within which to discover and explore the finding of one's mask—through doing and making. The first area covers the ethnological, anthropological, and performance related aspects of the mask's progressive evolution, up to and including the private/public social masks people don every day. Some of the mask theories

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<sup>106</sup> The work of the Sartori family dates back to the post-war period (1945-1947) when Italian intelligentsia renewed their desire to recover the origins of its cultural history through mask work. Amleto, primarily and Italian sculptor at that time, began a long period of experimental research on the concept of the mask. Since his passing, his son Donato has maintained the tradition of creating masks in the style of the ancient *bottega dell'arte* (workshop or laboratory of art); a tradition that continues to this day. Donato has handcrafted masks for some of Europe's greatest artists, including Barrault, Eduardo de Filipo, Strehler, Dario Fo, Peter Oskarson, and of course, cherishing the relationship his father before him, held with Jacques Lecoq. In 1979, together with scenographer Paolo Trombetta and architect Paola Pizzi, Donato founded the Centro committed to the continuous adaptation of maskerology vis a vis the challenging needs of contemporary society.

studied at the Centro even alluded to the mysteries of the historical artifact. For instance, we learned about the practice of Ancient physiognomy<sup>107</sup> (or face reading) that correlated a relationship between an individual's outward features with that of inner character (Redfield, 1852). Aristotle, Pythagoras, Socrates, all toyed with the idea. Denis Bablet (1962) writing on twentieth century British theatre modernist Edward Gordon Craig<sup>108</sup> (1872-1966) attributed its inherent power as follows:

To cover the actor's face with a mask would depersonalize him, make him 'un-natural'; it would compel him to pay attention to his movements, to rely on his physical means of expression, to re-create instead of reproducing. The mask is a safeguard against realism, a guarantee against the emotions. It turns a man into an über-marionette, it forces the actor to play in a symbolical style, having himself become a symbol. (p. 110)

I could not help but consider how this antiquated "science" and practice of studying a person's facial features to make predictions about their behaviour and personality continues to have a command and its relationship to body representation.

Speaking to the mask's ancient history, theatre scholar and mask specialist Sears A. Eldredge (1996) claims: "No one knows where or when the first human being picked up an object and decided to cover his face with it" (p.3). Sartori was not in any way mystical in his instruction of the mask, but he did command a high degree of respect and reverence to its enigmatic history. He also acknowledged sociological and problematic aspects of the mask. I was particularly interested in furthering this exploration as I felt there were parallels between the mask-making process and the process of language learning. Uncertainties accompany both—the former in the way of a physical surrender to movement influenced by the mind, the latter in the

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<sup>107</sup> *Physis* meaning nature, and *gnomon* meaning interpreter. See Redfield, 1852/ Digitized December 5, 2007.

<sup>108</sup> In 1908, Craig introduced the publication of a new periodical called *The Mask* as a response to theatre artists of anti-realism movement, from this, experiments on the concept of mask work and masking took flight. See Potts, 1996, pp. 12-13.

embodiment of, giving voice to, and surrendering to foreign sounding words, a moving-thinking of expressive communication.

Following the theoretical foundation, Sartori's 5-week master-class includes an intensive mask-building process that culminates with a movement workshop examining the mask beyond its identification as an object placed over the face. This corporeal study explores gestural structures of movement, in order to establish sustainable bodies that can "carry the form" of the mask (Eldredge, 1996, p. 43).

### **Sartori Centro - First Impressions**

*As I prepare to leave for my first day at the Centro, I am aware of the value of bringing my body to this experience. That is to say, I traveled here to Italy to embody the research and not merely read about and arrive at a hypothesis of the experience. As I begin this first day and move through the month here, I will keep checking in with what my physical presence contributes to the study as opposed to something I could have read about or imagined at a distance.* (Data field notes: Abano Terme, June 21, 2012)

Prior to attending the Sartori Centro mask master class, each participant submitted a brief statement indicating the purpose and/or intent of our time and travel to Abano Terme from our respective countries. On the first day as a way of introducing ourselves and at the same time getting acquainting with one another's work, we shared these statements. An international workshop, the Centro employed the services of a translator who, working in tandem with Sartori and his team, communicated all pertinent information in English.

I spoke about my doctoral research exploring the building of a neutral mask prototype that could function as a learning object for English language learning. Imagine my surprise when, after sharing my purpose in challenging the design of the NM for the benefit of my ELL body-

supplemental, Sartori said that the building of a neutral mask was an impossible task for a five-week master-class. Seeing the puzzled looks on several of the other participants' faces, I realized I was not alone in my desire to build a neutral mask. Thus, my travel to Italy and specifically for this purpose was short-lived, as on the first day of the workshop, I learned this would not be possible. Sartori and his team of teaching colleagues proceeded to explain why. Although the neutral mask appears to bear the simplest of features (no contours, dramatic lines, or highly expressive features) it is actually the hardest of all masks to build. Neutrality, so we would come to understand in the first days of the master class, is an intellectual concept for which Lecoq sought to find a corporeal equivalent, while Amleto responded with artisanal materials (Eldredge 1996, p. 49). Donato used a visual arts perspective to explain that he equated the neutral mask to shades of white and black—they contain no colour and all colours at the same time. In using this analogy, I understood his point to be that to become acquainted with white and/or black, we the participants of his workshop needed to understand all the colours within their spectrum. Creating a character mask, he assured us, would give us further insight into what he meant. Speaking from a lifetime of experience and almost three decades of conducting master classes, I think Sartori knew that in a mere five-week workshop, we could taste but a morsel of mask-making artistry. Believing that we would learn, design, and complete a full faced neutral mask in this short period was unrealistic. Some participants felt this was dishonest and deceptive on the *Centro's* part—i.e., a ploy to lure students to Italy with hopes of building a mask, only to find out they could not once they had arrived. From the *Centro's* perspective, I could see how they felt the experience, as in the process, was much more valuable than a finished product. I could also understand how this might not be an easy “sell,” in a way of advertising people to come, i.e. come for the

experience—equally, from the other participants' point of view, I could also understand how this might be construed as unethical.

This shift in expectations immediately set the tone for the kind of experience on which I embarked. I embraced knowing I would not design and create a neutral mask prototype. Surrendering to the disappointment allowed me to see how it reflected the messiness of teaching and learning—what we want from it, what we find, and what we get. The unfulfilled promises create a sense of shortcomings of what we think constitutes learning. I thought of the other dimension to my study and mask purpose: the newcomer student, language learning, in mainstream ELL classrooms, there is such hope for language acquisition/proficiency. Along the way, students often encounter institutional, social and personal obstacles that impede their learning and eventual integration. These challenges interfere with English language acquisition and proficiency. So I could not help but marvel at how the complete contradiction to the purpose and intent of my venturing over to the *Centro* in the first place; it paralleled much of what I was proposing in my very thesis about the dislocation of the learning subject.

In hindsight, the experience taught me that there is value in all learning, and more specifically, that there is no one, single way of learning. By surrendering the idea of what I *thought* I had travelled to the *Centro* to do, I could see that it was already there, albeit not in the linear, cognitive, and language-defined order I had formulated and organized. Now, three years later, as I reflectively review my field notes, I see a whole other side of the experience—much more than I had anticipated and beyond my initially proposed dissertation research study.

## **At the Centro**

*I overheard some of the participants discussing frustrations they were feeling with the process—or lack of process. There is a part of me that totally understands how Sartori*

*works and is accepting of the work—it's familiar—and yet a part of me resists it as well ... there is another part of me that is tired of trying to reinterpret or look for ways to interpret the pedagogy. That is to say, it is not in a conventional form that I can easily translate and apply to the needs of my doctoral work. This makes for a great observation on how I need to receive information in such a way in order to access and make use of it.* (Data field notes: Abano Terme, June 29, 2012)

Beyond the polite formalities of the first week, I began to notice how the mask work fell into two distinct categories: matters comprised of the actual physical, applied work of the studio, and matters that materialized *as result* or, in reaction to, the work occurring in the studio. It is important to acknowledge that we were not only a geographic cross-section of culturally diverse participants from the United States, West Indies, Canada, Spain, and France, but also in age range (between 17 and 70). This reflected our mask-making experience too, as amongst us there were theatre designers, professors of fine arts, two local high-school aged art students (as part of a co-operative education initiative), and me, the lone actor/graduate student.

By our second week together, I became aware of how many of the participants were questioning the method of instruction. What began as the odd grumble of disapproval, over time snowballed into acrimonious debates, creating fissures that eventually divided the participants into two groups—those who felt there was a lack of pedagogical organization versus those who took a “when in Rome” approach. I was in the latter, mostly due to my intended purpose of not interfering with research observation. The disapproving group interpreted my actions as a reluctance to side with them. In the local café after hours, my understanding of the disgruntled murmurs revealed concerns regarding the mask information—not in its content, but more in the manner of presentation (or lack thereof). They called into question the blunt delivery and

transmission of material, in some instances describing it as “militant.” Of greater relevance to my study was the assumption that they would find these methodologies there and their subsequent disappointment when they did not.

Peter McLaren (1999) speaks to this phenomenon in his study of ritual-like patterns and performances that reproduce themselves in learning, education and schooling. As a foundational cultural system, our collective understandings of the symbols and paradigms of education and instruction are deeply embedded into our lives. They influence how we know and/or recognize them (p. 215). Now, Sartori did not follow any form of institutionally approved teacher training. He was an artisan who had learned the craft of the mask-making trade through his father. He honed his art as an apprentice in the old style—the school of “hard knocks” styled rigor of mentor/discipline: watch, listen and learn. He was not one to coddle, or praise, which only seemed to cause further tension among the participants. This led me to wonder how much education and students impose upon or expected of the role of teacher. Conversely, how do preconceived notions of the teacher influence the role of the student? In relation to recognized teacher accreditation, Sartori’s Centro practised a different form of pedagogy—one that did not necessarily follow the scaffolding of instruction as it appeared to the majority of the participants, usually accustomed to a particular and different teacher/student relationship and transmission/construction of knowledge. The master class, as I saw it, took a more traditional demonstration-imitation approach. Sartori would work with the materials (be they a piece of wood or leather) as a way of *showing* us the process before suggesting we return to our respective work areas to recreate what we had watched him do.

### *Via Negativa*

*Sartori's methodology seems to follow a watching and learning type of training. Or rather, learn by mistakes. The teaching style seems to be the student must watch what the master-craftsman does and learn from their movements. Quite literally Sartori explained how his is a process of embodying his movements and thus reproducing it in own our work. He shared a story of a Commedia dell'Arte teacher in Italy who years prior had asked him to join him in a workshop. He said that this particular person would give his students blocks of wood and tools and then tell his students to make a mask without himself first demonstrating how. I think what Sartori was trying to say in recounting this story is how students need to see the work being done—as in a visual component of learning, in order to reproduce what they saw. The more I thought of this the more I wondered how very difficult this is as a learning concept. It engages a whole other element that assumes a level of understanding in the seeing and interpreting of what you see a la 'do as I do'. (Data field notes: Abano Terme, July 6, 2012)*

The premise of *via negativa*, which (unfavourably) translates as “negative way,” is the search for one’s way through negation—as in learning through the trial and error process of negotiation (Lecoq, 2000). The pedagogical approach to mask work at the Centro strongly resembled the practice of *via negativa* at the Lecoq School. That is, by not telling students how to do things the “right” way (and all the connotations that go with notions of right, correct, positive), Lecoq and Sartori believed that pointing out what is not working encourages a proposing of new or other ideas and thus encourages perpetual exploration on the part of the student (Murray, 2003, p. 49). Compliments, in both locations, were rare to non-existent. As a

learning technique, the aim is to nurture students' creativity as opposed to prescribing a set of codified skills and theories.

In the last two decades, I have had several experiences working with traditional, male, "old school" European artisans, who share a similar way of working. From an Anglo/non-European perspective, I could see how their interactions might appear dismissive or domineering. To me, it was what it was—and without a doubt, part of the private workshop experience, and familiar (in a familial way). I was therefore neither surprised nor annoyed. Additionally, as I share the same culture as the instructors of the Sartori Centro, I could understand and interpret many of the studio-related nuances, which out of cultural context, could be easily misconstrued. This began what would become one of many dual—uniquely positioned—focused observations. I was not an artisan there to further the craft of my mask making skill and technique, but a researcher investigating the development of an alternative mask pedagogy that could be transposed into education. I was not Italian by birth but I could completely understand both the native language of instruction—including the non-translatable cultural nuances. Additionally, as the only Lecoquian trained participant in Sartori's workshop (and professionally trained actor) I believe my prior understanding of the mask's performance technique slightly advantaged my approach to the class.<sup>109</sup> I do not mean this in the way of the artistry and skill required in building of a mask, but in its overall comprehension. For instance, the mask is an object that communicates through the movement of the actor. Donato would often use performance related examples to assist in helping us consider the dimension of embodiment required. He used mask movement parallels similar to that of Lecoq's instruction, provoking questions, such as, is it the actors' body that informs the movement or the mask that decides? This may appear a rhetorical question, but to a

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<sup>109</sup> On a personal note, I could feel how Donato recognized and honoured my Lecoquian training through the respect he conferred in our teacher/student interactions.

theatre student of mask performance it is a completely legitimate concern. In instances such as this one, my Lecoquian foundation indirectly resonated with the overall arc of the alternative learning concepts in my field studies. As non-traditional teaching/learning practices, the foundations that comprised the knowledge structure of each were equally unconventional. I must emphasize, although instruction at the Centro may have appeared informal and un-structured,<sup>110</sup> the rigorous work demands toward advancing the masks developments and manipulating challenging, foreign materials, asked a great deal of its participants. The *cinque fasi di costruzione della maschera* (the five phases of mask construction), followed a highly structured outline. To illustrate how it did bear a logic and order, I created a weekly outline (Figure 3:4) of the Sartori master-class (i.e. the program of study at the Centro did not appear this way) as a way to help me consider an embodied equivalent that resembled a building of learning stages in the design of my In-class ELL field study.

### **Me, the Disadvantaged Student**

*It was not a good day for my strengths—by this I mean, it was a day dedicated to drawing and I am not a very good drawer. There were moments of great personal frustration as I tried to accept what I had drawn and not judge it. The drawing exercise got worse as I began to add colour and paint. I really had no idea what I was doing and at one point said to a fellow participant (one of a few scenic designers in the group) that I was out of my element. (Data field notes: Abano Terme, June 26, 2012)*

With very little in the way of a studio visual art background to lean on, I found all phases in the mask work process challenging. As researcher, I took interest in the difficulty and

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<sup>110</sup> “Informal learning is usually a form of situated learning.” In situated learning conditions, learning takes place when learners and instructors collaborate to reach some level of shared understanding, often through contextualized activity. See Mans 2007, p. 780.

intimidation I occasionally felt working alongside more competent participants who, for the most part, were talented artisans in their own right. Sartori's workshop did not start from scratch—he assumed all participants were familiar or had at least a basic understanding of studio work, tools, and methods. It made me think about the varying levels of English-language acquisition and proficiency of ELL classrooms. It is not unheard of to find an older ELL student working at an elementary school language learning level in the same class with younger students.

Unintentionally (albeit befittingly) I realized that I had deliberately placed myself in this disadvantaged position. In other words, although I had not factored in my marginal studio skills when considering the Sartori master class as a field location, my effort to navigate my limitations to help make less strange a foreign experience, helped me consider the newcomer student in the foreignness of new, strange experience.

Given the competency of my skilled fellow participants at the Centro, I observed their techniques and often turned to them to inquire about steps or procedures of which I was unaware. I was cognizant of how much this resembled Lev Vygotsky's (1986) zone of proximal development (ZPD).<sup>111</sup> Vygotsky identified the ZPD as the gap between what a learner can do, her or his actual level of development, and what he or she can achieve, or potential development, under the guidance of more knowledgeable or proficient people (e.g., parents, teachers, peers, others) (p. 90). In the master class, I intuitively sought assistance from the other participants. Even though the original intention of Vygotsky's ZPD was to measure the development of cognitive intelligence, I was interested in developing a similar movement-based relationship

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<sup>111</sup> My Masters' (MA) thesis drew from the educational learning/development strategies of Lev Vygotsky. I examined his theories of socio-cultural theory (SCT), semiotic mediation, gesture and mediation, preverbal to verbal, symbolic play, imitation and the zone of proximal development (ZPD).

between learning and development for my In-class study, albeit through the command of students' perspective.

### **Lost in Translation and the Cognitive Unconscious**

*In the first week of the master-class, the Centro employed a translator. A woman originally from the United Kingdom who has resided in the Veneto region for many years—a ‘side-kick’ to Sartori. There to translate from his Italian into English, this was for the benefit of international participants ... The Saturday after our first week of classes, I asked a fellow classmate—a German woman—how she was enjoying the workshop so far, she said she was not happy with the simultaneous translation. As she also had a basic understanding of Italian she expressed how confusing it was, to know some words were less detailed in English that she recognized them in their original Italian intent. Likewise an American participant mentioned it was confusing who to watch—Sartori as he spoke or the translator as she translated. After that initial first week, after the translator had left, collectively those of us who understood Italian or the Italians who spoke some English would help the others.*

(Data field notes: Abano Terme, June 23, 2012)

In many ways, this peer-assistance element that perhaps wasn't necessarily intentional on the part of the Centro was certainly unavoidable as Sartori (similar to Lecoq) did not speak English and thus, the language of instruction was in his native Italian. What further confused things, not all the participants in the master-class spoke English—or Italian for that matter. Often, by default, it fell upon me to act as interpreter. It was an awkward position I felt obligated to occupy. By this, I mean it was hardly fair to be following the lesson/instruction in Italian, all the while hearing the whispers (in English) of the incomprehension and frustrations the others

were experiencing. I also shared a flat with two of the non-Italian speaking participants who expressed how exhausting it was trying to follow the inconsistent language translation. They did not know whether they should watch Sartori or me, as I interpreted, as he spoke. Additionally, my translation attempts at interpreting Sartori's answers to their questions did not always resonate in a manner that many felt adequately addressed their inquiries necessary for comprehension. This was not solely a language problem but reflected more the way in which Sartori taught, i.e. every question did not necessarily have an answer, but rather resided in the discovery (for an answer). He would often say the material, whether wood, clay, or leather was "speaking" to us—and as we worked and manipulated them into the intended mask design, we would find the answers.

For the most part, all technique-related lessons were in the form of a visual demonstration. Jokingly we began calling this his "Do as I do" technique. Yet in *Philosophy of the Flesh* (1999), George Lakoff identifies this as a phenomenon of the "cognitive unconscious" (p. 11). Cognitive science, Lakoff tells us, uses the term "cognitive" alternatively—almost antithetical to its psychological definition of a mental function to process knowledge. In cognitive science, unconscious processes such as visual/auditory processing of experience, memory, attention, phonology, conceptual systems, mental lexicon and so forth are all complex neural engagements that contribute to an embodied system of cognition (pp. 11-12).

Sartori had a way of taking students work into his own hands, literally. Some of the participants felt this was interfering with, and imposing upon them, their creative choices. Others felt that it did not truly teach them about the process, but merely skipped them. I understood how Sartori was either rectifying or taking precautionary measures to prevent a possible mishap in one of mask-building phases. Besides, given my less-than-skillful abilities, I appreciated his

reworking of areas I was unable to see, let alone fix. Using participant's work Sartori would demonstrate techniques and then, in a diligent manner, make his way around the studio watching *how* we applied what we saw to our work. Coming from a performance background, where it was common for a director or fellow scene partner to demonstrate suggestions in the way of movement or text delivery, I was familiar with this working method, but I could also see both sides of the problem. One was the Centro's expectation that the group would naturally ascribe to and follows a visually transmitted form of learning, and second, that this was an easy-to-follow process of working. It placed undue expectation on the participants, asking that they interpret much of the invisible steps and information—which, as it turned out, was less obvious than they appeared.

***Cinque Fasi di Construzione della Maschera*** (Five Phases of Mask Construction) (Figure 3:4)

*When Donato arrived this morning (a little after the group) he walked around looking at what we were busily drawing. He sat next to me which was both a pleasure and an intimidation. Holding my work in his hands, he reached for a pencil and asked about my design. Soon one of the other instructors also pulled up a chair and sat down beside him. They began to inquire about 'finding' my mask through this initial drawing stage, when I was suddenly overcome with the desire to move. I stood up to show them what I meant—but in speaking the descriptions, I was also moving my body in the way that I felt a particular nose length might lead the walk of the mask, how the size of the eye sockets would direct the head movements and upper body, i.e. frenetic bird-like head tilts for small eye holes and slower controlled owl-like movements if I were to choose larger ones. In these demonstrations I was already living the body of the mask—this was my Lecoq training and*

*Sartori knew it too. That's what 'finding' my mask meant to me.* (Data field notes: Abano Terme, June 26, 2012)

When friends ask me about my experience at the Sartori master-class, I often start by saying how I was the workshop participant example for what *not* to do. In this section, as a way to guide the reader through my five weeks at the *Centro*, I explain what I mean by this through the compilation of images in Figure 3:5. For example, image one (the foremost top-left corner photo) shows three pencil drawings and my nearly completed half leather mask in the foreground. Chronologically, I took the photo around week four of the master class process. When I look at this picture now, I can see how the trajectory from pencil design to leather half mask book-ended the whole process—along with the many oops, no's and *faux pas*'s along the way. These include the misuse of tools, the over- and under-use of materials, the lack of hand-eye coordination in working from a blueprint, and the shedding of blood, sweat and tears—in both the figurative and literal sense. Although the progressive steps in each phase of the mask's development (including the various materials used) helped the design to become clearer, the workmanship became harder.

Before Sartori came to sit beside me, as mentioned in the above field notes, I had been struggling with the pencil sketch of my mask. What I felt the design should be, and how I could feel the mask's movements, was not translating to the paper (largely due to my limited drawing skills). I was constantly erasing and redrawing lines, and unfavourably judging the quality of the work. I was also putting pressure on myself because I knew the drawing would serve as the foundation for all the other steps in the process. The pencil drawing would become the blueprint, serving as a “face plan” that we would return to repeatedly throughout the five phases of building

variations on one mask. Unlike in a studio or on a stage where an innate power takes over and I know—through feeling—if something is good or bad, right or wrong, here I had no clue.

Yet I must share that apart from feelings of frustration during this step of process, I actually enjoyed wrestling with *the process*. This could reflect my naiveté and lack of visual arts background (in the sense of “what you don’t know”), or to my years working in the Lecoq method where I learned how to suspend awareness in a space of non-linear knowing. At the Lecoq School, demystifying the symbolic ways we know things always led one to finding a unique way of knowing for comprehension, and in the process, gaining responsibility for what you came to know through how you came to know it.

It was in these early days of the master-class that I began to appreciate why I had travelled across the Atlantic to partake in this workshop (despite the fact that I had been told I could not construct a NM). It required that I challenge myself in a completely different way. I recalled Lecoq’s philosophy that we place too much emphasis on the need to analyze physical and visual expression for intellectual meaning. In my struggles with the pencil drawing, I needed to learn to accept what I was producing, and appreciate the inaccuracies and disproportionate lines—and not reject the process. What I had produced was, after all, a form of personal expression, something that had emerged from me in a state of *disponibilité* (awareness and ready to receive). I decided that to take the workshop solely at face value (to produce a mask) would completely devalue all the other transdisciplinary reasons behind my purpose for including the Sartori field study in my research. The environment was full of alternative learning opportunities, but they were not conspicuous, nor, we would soon find out, compatible with the familiar learning structures common to the participants present.

Although I have only selected 25 images, Figure 3:5 captures all the five phases of the mask's construction, beginning with the drawing and moving (left to right) through an order of production steps: clay, plaster, paper mache, wood, and leather. As the self-proclaimed, disadvantaged student, I felt each phase of these steps came with its own set of challenges. As if to provide some pathetic fallacy, during the five-week mask master-class, Italy was experiencing one of its hottest summer seasons ever.

### **Grist to the Mill: Of Clay, Plaster, Paper Mache, Wood, and Leather**

*This afternoon over lunch, I asked Donato if he felt the mask could have a function outside the theatre and performance. He said he believed it could have pedagogical value, that it could be used for therapeutic uses. He shared that years ago he took mask work into institutions for people with mental disabilities and prisons. The prisoners consisted of mainly foreigners (to Italy) and heroin addicts. I shared my work with newcomer youth. He listened intently as I told him how in my Masters I had worked with refugee students and how it had stirred up a lot of fascinating data for both my thesis but also for me—hence my continuation of the work at a doctoral level. With a grin, he replied, along the lines of you just wait a few weeks here when we begin to get lost in the construction of the mask making, you will see a great many stirrings then too. I told him I was very much aware of how potent mask work can be full of struggle, tension and release. (Data field notes:*

Abano Terme, July 2, 2012)

#### *Clay*

The last time I had worked with clay was during high school art class where we made cups and vases using a potter's wheel. Due to the 30+ Celsius temperatures daily, it was difficult to

manipulate *l'argilla* (the clay); it kept losing moisture and the protruding dimensional bits, of the nose or raised eyebrows would begin to dry out and harden.<sup>112</sup> Clay work is a fascinating process in that it is constantly evolving with each addition to make the shape. Keeping one's fingers moist enough to smooth and shape but not too wet to erase features was also tricky—too dry could rub away the nuance planes of the check bones and eye sockets, too damp made for sticky-like muddy clay creating a jagged-y surface—that required more shaping, evolving and emerging of features. When fingers are too wet the clay turns mucky and causes streaks of water—the same streaks I was trying to smooth away. Sartori instructed me to cover the sections not in use with damp cheesecloth—which also needed constant spraying. He reminded us that clay is earth and it is alive and hungry. He also suggested that I keep my fingers clean when massaging the clay to smooth out rough spots. He demonstrated this nifty way of using the palm of his left hand like an empty palette while he dabbed his right fingers in water, alternating between the index, the ring finger and pinky, cleaning each on the dry left palm. It was such a complicated choreography of manual dexterity, movement deeply ingrained in his hands from years of work. Suffice to say, I always seemed to retain clay on my fingers. I tried to break down Donato's finger dance, but the slow speed of my finger rotation was causing the clay to dry. He showed me how to use a wooden tool to act as my fingertips—without the sensation or resilience of flesh. Fingertips, so Donato told us, like perspiration and body oils leave their imprints in the clay. The body's engagement was of vital importance to the work. The act of contributing one's own personal touch to the mask's evolution is directly proportionate to our individual, physical manipulation of the form. Through this body-to-material process, personal expression becomes part of the process too. The work, primarily constructed with our hands—or the tools that held them, Sartori would often demonstrate how to have the body weight behind a given phase. He

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<sup>112</sup> Sartori would go into the studio late into the evening and spray all our pieces down so that they would keep moist throughout the night.

would constantly demonstrate the correct way to stand, sit, lean into the work, always making certain to instruct where to cradle the manipulatives (tools) in the palm of our hands, how to position the fingers, the space between the elbow and the rib cage to gain the best support, strength and leverage in the sculpting process. Remnants of the body's presence is a critical element of "self" reflected in the final product.

Significantly, at each of our individual working stations, our pencil drawings lay immediately to the left of our clay slabs as we were constantly using measuring tools (rulers, spring/outside calipers, string, compass, tape) to make certain that the sketch design matched the face measurements taken prior to the commencing. I quickly came to understand how vitally important mathematics would be in the process of mask making, something I had not anticipated.

### *Plaster*

The plaster phase of our actual faces following the clay (second row Figure 3:1) was necessary for the *cartapesta* or *papier-mâché* (paper mache in English) construction. The reproduced image of our face in paper maché was the first actual mask made. To this point, we had the one-dimensional drawing, the two-dimensional clay version, and now, with concave depth added, the maché produced a third dimension. In other words, it was wearable, whereas the first two were merely parts of the (mask) process. Sartori adheres to a very organic application of plastering technique—so we would quickly find out. We spent a morning in the shop learning how to mix the gloopy plaster to get it to the correct consistency to make the face-moulds. In groups of three, we made some testers. One person would lay down to have their face entirely covered in Vaseline, the second person would be the designated pourer of the plaster (onto the face of the person lying down), while the third person made certain equal amounts of the plaster

was spread evenly around the face (checking for air bubbles, etc.). The third person also seemed to become a coach of sorts, instructing the second person where to pour the plaster and reassuring the first person lying down to keep still and relax. This was mostly because (and here is the organic application part) Sartori and his team of instructors did not allow straws for breathing purposes in the nostrils or mouth during the plaster pouring. He felt it leaves an artificially constructed hole that can impose or direct the creativity of a mask—in an already determined decision way. Instead, it was the third person's responsibility, with the use of a tiny scalpel, to make certain to maintain hole-like airway passages around the nostrils for breathing purposes, while the first person poured the mixture. This was the ultimate trust exercise. An excerpt from my field notes captures my experience:

*It is an amazing feeling, a sensorial heightening, as plaster is poured, begins to dry, and hardens on the face. The weight is oppressive as it simultaneously congeals and detaches from the skin (due to the Vaseline coating). Remarkably during the push/pull part of this process, a creative impression of the face-self is forming.* (Data field notes: Abano Terme, June 27, 2012)

In my field notes of that day, I had also likened the sensation of having the plaster mould removed from my face, pulled from the skin's surface and the reveal of the plaster negative to Emmanuel Levinas (1985) “exposure without defense” (pp. 86-87). As the plaster substance actively re-prints shapes, lines, and curves in a cast form, the face vulnerably exposes unspoken tensions, anxieties, and even fear, in the surrender of the experience. John Drabinski and Eric Nelson (2014) writing on this Levinas quote offer, “the face is thus exposure [...] this radical exposure of the face is radically stripped of protection, defenseless: the face is defenselessness itself.” (p. 182)

### *Paper Maché*

We spent an afternoon learning about paper maché, including a brief history of maché work dating back to ancient China. The technique of paper maché application is a delicate balance between the amounts of layers necessary, the different types of paper needed within the build-up of the layers and paper to glue ratio. The maché part of the mask process consisted of applying hundreds of little bits of gooey paper to our now hardened plaster casts of our face. There is a soothing, meditative quality to this work. I found myself recalling experiences of working paper maché as a young child in elementary school. Similar to clay work, it was hard to control the stickiness of the glue and degree of finger cleanliness needed to smooth over edges. In this instance, the heat of the Italian sun worked in our favour, as we only needed to place them out in the sun light for an hour or so between layers. It was a repetitive process of pasting four different strips of paper: white, thin blue, thick egg-carton type, followed by a final thick blue. Five layers later, and thanks to the liquid substance (similar to the Vaseline applied to our faces) poured onto the plaster, the maché mask replica virtually popped off the plaster. Next, we coated the work with highly toxic glue that solidified the paper as it hardened. Remarkably, it now felt more like a soft plastic than the flimsiness of paper. Then came the fun part of painting in features, I was very conscious of not being overzealous with colour as I did not want to lock the mache mask into a specific type or character. I knew this would limit the play (*le jeu*) of the mask once it was animated.

### *Wood*

*Today we began the wood phase! We began with the wood and continued through to the lunch hour—nonstop! Woodwork is very hard and very tiring. Around the lunch hour, one*

*of the studio assistants mentioned that we should eat a hearty meal, as we needed to advance the wood in order to move onto the leather phase in the next days. So now, I was tired and anxious about completing in time. The thing about woodworking is, if you carve too much off the surface you constantly have to readjust your measured points to balance the surface of the mask-face as it emerges from the wood. This meant constant caliper/ruler measuring. Unlike clay work, you could not add bits to build it up; wood was all about the negative (removal). (Data field notes: Abano Terme, July 5, 2012)*

The wood phase of mask making was memorable. Not only was it the first time I had ever carved wood, but I also carved a slice off the palm of my hand in the process—solidifying my place as the participant example for what-not-to-do. After lunch on that first day of woodworking, I somehow thought that if I chipped away large chunks I could reveal the mask in the wood faster, and gain time in its completion. Not only was this the incorrect way to carve wood, but in moving too quickly over a large expanse, and doing without properly handling the weapon-like carving tool, the sharp edge slide out from underneath my grip and ripped into the palm of my other hand. I stabbed myself. Quickly blood began to surface as I, poised, moved away to keep the red from dripping onto the wood. I asked a fellow participant if they could help me by grabbing a clean cloth to put pressure on my hand and control the bleeding. I was beginning to feel queasy. With the summer heat, the adrenalin pumping through my body doubled the amount of body fluid and perspiration. Now I felt faint. At Donato's suggestion, some of the fellow participants helped me out back under a shaded tree to lie down on a lawn chair. He came to inspect the cut. He said it was not deep and would not require stitches. He told me to take the afternoon off. One of the studio assistants would take over some of my sculpting so that I did not fall too far behind the others.

The next day, with my heavily taped hand, I was extra careful as I continued my carving. The injury of the day before taught me a valuable sculpting lesson about going against the grain of the wood, and imposing a cut where the wood would not allow. Like the aliveness of clay, Donato commented that although the wood was no longer part of a tree, its rings are the ultimate determinant that controls the design. He said the wood speaks to you, and you need to listen to what it is asking. The unfortunate part was that we were quickly running out of time as we were already nearing four weeks. The leather specialist was to arrive in a few days and many of us (myself especially) were nowhere near completed. Apart from the carving of the wood, there was the arduous task of filing and sanding the carved piece in order to prepare it for the leather. Once again, Sartori wanted us to learn the old-fashioned hand and sandpaper technique instead of using an electric sander (eventually when we smoothed down our wooden masks sufficiently he let us use the machine for a final finish). Here, the problem was the opposite from the clay and glue, where my hands became incredibly dry and cracked from the lack of moisture—little did we know what we were in for with the next, and final, leather phase of the mask making process.

### *Leather*

Leather is cattle hide (or skin) and all the durableness that goes with it. Curing leather was perhaps the hardest part yet. The selected pieces needed to become flexible enough to wrap around our carved wooden mask models. Therefore, from the super-dry hands, here we had constantly wet hands—and the frequent wringing of the wet leather soaking in water, literally caused tiny incisions like paper-cuts in our palms. All of these mask steps revealed the need to use your bare hands; the touch and feel often act as a guide. Gloves were not an option. I received a piece of leather that had a slight scar in it. I could not help but think how this was part

of the animal—a trace of their skin. Of course, if diligently kneaded and manipulated, this line would become less prominent in my character mask, but ultimately it would always retain this memory of its former life. The process was a series of steps: soaking, wringing, twisting/turning of the leather on a diagonal and horizontal in an effort to help eliminate water and make it as flexible as possible for shaping. The clay and paper maché were forgiving steps in the process, you could make a mistake and recuperate the mistake, but the wood and leather were less so. I recall feeling very timid about creating the necessary slices needed to create folds to make the leather fit the wood model. Working with leather was actually very much like the work of a tailor or seam-stress. In addition, the odd little tools needed for leatherwork felt cumbersome and awkward. I did not really know how to coordinate them. The leather specialist explained that the neutral mask encountered its biggest obstacle at the leather stage—mostly because it required that the leather also adhere to a neutral-ness, which required a lot of time and labour in the process. Essentially, what she meant was that the leather had to be perfect in order for it to translate as neutral. The odd bump or air pocket would immediately characterize the mask. It is no wonder that the price Sartori charges for the making of one leather mask is so high (up to, and into, the low four figures). I remembered a funny story of a Canadian friend who, years earlier, had written the *Centro* to commission a series of a half dozen masks. The *Centro* replied that they were not a factory and if they wanted, they could have two.

### **Shifting Experience**

*A day that would make one's head spin! Work at Sartori's was a non-stop process of plaster, sanding/filing, glue and wax coats, including a wood cutting and ban-saw demonstration and repeating the process at their various drying stages—it was a final push*

*to get this stage of the mask completed to move onto the next ... the steps to make the mask became less of explanation and more of a hurry-up process toward completion.* (Data field notes: Abano Terme, July 13, 2012)

In our fifth week together, everything changed as we left the studio space to work on embodying our respective masks with Italian mask-movement coach Fabio Mangolini. This felt like the true test that helped me assess and confirm the validity and ultimate success of a body-in-language supplemental for ELL curricula. In our first meeting with Mangolini, masks in hand, we listened while he spoke of avoiding conflict by not imposing *on the mask* structures of thinking, language, and voice. Mangolini (who, apart from his native Italian, spoke in English, French and Spanish), emphasized how the movement of mask work engaged a listening that emanated from the body:

*Your body is the writer behind the mask, you must enter into the mask and write as the mask asks and not to enter the mask to be the mask, enter to listen to the tensions of the mask.* (Field notes Mangolini, 2012)

In my field notes, I identified this final week as a “shift in the Centro experience.” It was as though suddenly, all the frustrations, conflicts, and personal incompetences of the previous four weeks disappeared. The micro analyzing of right/wrong and correct/incorrect pedagogical judgments and opinion fell away. Instead, the process of bringing the mask to life became the focus.

What almost immediately transpired was the critical relationship between the object of the mask and the embodied experience as a method to awaken the body, as subject, in processes of making meaning. These experiences in the Sartori master class would help me to consider strategies for my ELL newcomer students, including: verbal language discrepancies, as well as

designing methods like pantomime, gesture, and imitation, which would be grounded in processes of doing—techniques that naturally focused on physical performance. This way, students who are less proficient in grammar or spoken English would not find themselves at a disadvantage. By positioning the body as the site of learning, I would encourage collective learning through a pooling together of individual resources; the students would work collectively in areas, and each could identify with and contribute to the task as I had found a way to familiarize the strange of the *unfamiliar* learning content and method of instruction at the Centro. McLaren (1998) calls this the “primacy of student experience,” and writes:

Teachers must understand that students’ experience arises from multiple discourses and subjectivities, some of which must be questioned more critically than others. It is crucial therefore, that educators address the question of how the social world is experienced, mediated, and produced by students. Failure in this will not only prevent teachers from tapping into the drives, emotions, and interests that give students their own unique voice, but will also make it difficult to provide the momentum for learning itself. (p. 218)

## **Research in a Mainstream English language Classroom: Testing the Body-Supplemental**

### **In-Class Overview**

This second field-study was an opportunity to incorporate some of what I experienced at the Sartori studio by applying it to in a high school classroom setting. I visited the ELL class comprised of learners assessed at Level’s 1-3<sup>113</sup>, twice weekly over the course of four weeks

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<sup>113</sup> **ELL Level1:** ‘builds on students’ previous education and language knowledge to introduce them to the English language and help them adjust to the diversity in their new environment. Students will use beginning English language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing for everyday and essential academic purposes. They will engage in short conversations using basic English language structures and simple sentence patterns; read short adapted texts; and write phrases and short sentences. The course also provides students with the knowledge and skills they need to begin to adapt to their new lives in Canada. **Level 2:** extends students’ listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English for everyday and academic purposes. Students will participate in conversations in structured situations on a variety of familiar and new topics; read a variety of texts designed or adapted for English language learners; expand their knowledge of English grammatical structures and sentence patterns; and link English sentences to compose paragraphs. The course also supports students’ continuing adaptation to the Ontario school

(spread throughout the fall semester of 2012). There were only a few students who were engaging in some mainstream classes such as math and geography. For the most part, these learners spent their day with the one ELL teacher covering a variety of the required course curriculum.

A participant-observer, for one 70-minute class period, I introduced alternative (Lecoquian) movement based pedagogy to newcomer youth, as a supplement to their regularly scheduled English language-learning period. Similar to the building blocks of developmental stages at the Centro, I created an arc of physical activities that would slowly introduce the concept of my supplemental process (Figure 3:6). As the researcher, I used a narrative writing format, journaling mini-scenes each day, with the intention that when assembled, their contents would tell a comprehensive story. Given that I was leading the workshop, it was impossible to record observations and take field notes at the same time. Adhering to Martin Hammersley and Paul Atkinson's (2009) ethnographic principles in practice, I did "make notes as soon as possible after the observed action" (p. 142).

In a similar style to the Sartori notes, I begin each section below with an unedited italicized excerpt (albeit not necessarily in chronological order) taken from the actual field notes, as lead-ins to the rest of the self-reflective narratives connecting my personal experience of the In-Class to the larger autobiographical story of the thesis.

I had offered the students and their parents/guardians full disclosure of my presence in the classroom. They knew I was conducting a research study from York University who would join their class for an eight-week period to lead a theatre mask/movement workshop. Yet I did request

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system by expanding their knowledge of diversity in their new province and country. **Level 3:** Students will make short classroom oral presentations; read a variety of adapted and original texts in English; and write using a variety of text forms. As well, students will expand their academic vocabulary and their study skills to facilitate their transition to the mainstream school program. This course also introduces students to the rights and responsibilities inherent in Canadian citizenship, and to a variety of current Canadian issues." See The Ontario Curriculum 2007, p.p. 61-85.

from both the External Research Review Committee (ERRC) and the classroom teachers that they withhold the full extent of my study until completion of my workshop sessions with them. The students knew I was a graduate student working with them in a reciprocal high school-university study capacity, but they did not know the specific or particular purpose in observing their integration of the body in English-language learning. I did not articulate how I was exploring their embodied engagement in the space of their English language-learning classroom.

Drawing from previous experience as an arts-educator, I have found the sensitivity of performance-based work with its attendant awkwardness, discomfort, shyness, apprehension, and similar such emotions tends to elicit over-exaggerated or pushed “performed” responses from participants. This would be counterproductive to the study. I did not intend to misrepresent my position or deceive the student-participants, but rather, I wanted to maintain the integrity and authenticity necessary to conduct the research effectively. At a de-briefing on the final day, I would communicate the full purpose for the workshop.

Many of the In-class study student-participants who had arrived to Canada were influenced by structures of colonial education, with a focus on conventional learning practices of core subjects (Kumar, 1988; Chaturvedi and Ginsburg, 1988). I grew cognizant of this dynamic as I worked with them, especially in terms of how my body-based pedagogy was being received in the context of the ELL classroom, in relation to their studies, and in maintenance of the dominant/subordinate social positions overall (Anisef, 2013; McLaren, 1998; Giroux, 2001). The students, therefore, had preconceived ideas about the body shaped by their respective cultures, religious beliefs, and families, both in terms of their standardized expectations of schooling and their individual socio-cultural notions of the body. By preconceived, I mean in the sense that they appeared before me with a very fixed notions of their bodies, in respect to the movements they

made (or felt they were allowed to make), and the implicit understanding of (managed sexual, biological) functions, purpose and place in the classroom. In a neo-Freirian manner of speaking, they had predisposed ideas about what language class and, for that matter, what learning more broadly was supposed to entail and produce. They were also affected by virtue of our roles: I, being the ‘teacher’, and them the ‘learner’, and the assumption that I possessed the English (knowledge), they were in need of acquiring. On a practical level, this did not necessarily translate into shared perspectives on how the body is viewed, accepted, or rejected in the classroom. Furthermore, most of my student-participants were new to western education and therefore had little-to-no drama or theatre classroom experience.

I anticipated the physical space of the mainstream ELL classroom would be crowded, occupied by the usual material culture of schools: desks, chairs, books, and chalkboard. Their presence in the ELL space would present a challenge to the study. This material culture could maintain traditional forms of learning and, in turn, potentially contribute to a resistance to the alternative, embodied work I was attempting to conduct; the presence of these more traditional objects could re-emphasize how they identify, understand, and even accept standardized forms of pedagogy (Merleau-Ponty 1962, p.77). Significant to my study, the disruption of spatial comprehension revealed several assumptions made about the classroom as a space, including the assumed roles of teacher-student identifications and the learning objectives of course content. For instance, this became apparent when we removed the chairs and desks and sat on the floor. The act of covering the blackboards pointed toward the need to communicate through movement and gesture. Due to these minor adjustments, the learning experience was almost immediately altered—suddenly the learner could no longer rely on habits or the prior procedure of an understood pedagogical dynamic (i.e. standing teacher, backside to class writes on board, student

seated facing board copies, teacher asks questions, students reply ...and so forth). In restructuring the setup of the room otherwise, I was also attempting to choreograph the learning otherwise. In essence, I was asking them to change their place and contribution as well.

### **Telling Stories: Body Experience to Language**

In an effort to unpack and apply my research questions, the aim of the second study in the ELL classroom was to introduce body-to-language learning techniques, techniques based directly on neutral mask work, into a mainstream ELL classroom. As I have discussed thus far, a critical relationship between the object of the mask and the person wearing it has the potential to awaken the body as subject and method, and awaken the subject to a heightened self-awareness in the meaning making of new language learning. The *Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 and 10 English* (2007) states: “Language development is central to students’ intellectual, social, cultural, and emotional growth and must be seen as a key component of the curriculum …Language is the basis for thinking, communicating, learning, and viewing the world” (pp. 9-10). A neutral-mask-to-ELL supplemental shifts the scholastic<sup>114</sup> approach to language learning as an engagement of the mind, to include the body *in the experience* of language learning. Granted, the foundations of epistemic and syntactical meaning are already present in the newcomer students’ mother tongue. Through the In-class field study, however, I hoped to achieve an understanding of how a return to language of the body in meaning making may minimize, for the newcomer student, feelings of inadequacy and subordination when learning grammar and speech proficiency. By connecting the body in the processes of learning a new language, English, this approach sought to alleviate

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<sup>114</sup> See Ministry of Education, *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 and 10 English*.

linguistic meaning's primacy—a thinking-language model.<sup>115</sup> It also sought to give an advantage the new learner in the making of meaning through movement. As researcher, I wanted to contextualize my relationship to the research by means of embodied processes, namely my own subjective experiencing that occurred in my body during my training of Lecoq's pedagogy. The key question became could I transpose the pedagogy to make it accessible to others for developing a physical vocabulary for understanding their experiences in the language-learning process.

An essential part of the learning process at the Lecoq School focuses on the uniqueness of the body for developing a sense of self<sup>116</sup>—a view that is integral to the process of learning. Writing about Lecoq's influential body training in contemporary culture, scholar Simon Murray (2003) explains:

The human body is not a fixed biological, anatomical or 'god-given' entity. Rather, the body carries the traces of its own history – it 'speaks' of who we are. When we look at bodies—including our own—we see more than just flesh, hair, blood, muscles and so on. We see personal biography, the masks of suffering or happiness, and the imprint of class, gender, race and all those other characteristics and dispositions that make us who we are. (p. 39)

Lecoq believed that through the intimate exploration and truth of one's own physical body (height, weight, colour, and so forth), students could connect learning to the *individualness* of their own "instrument." Clearly, "truth" is a relative term, but my use of Lecoq's truth is

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<sup>115</sup> Neuroscience advancement has uncovered that learning a new language changes the way you think. See Drs. Yutaka Sato, Reiko Mazuka, *Brain and Language*, 2013. Additionally, body researchers have begun to look beyond the study of gesture-to-language correlations to focus instead on the head, claiming that movements made by the skull are not random instead "they mark the structure of ongoing discourse and are used to regulate interaction". I will speak to this further in the next chapter. See Evelyn Z. McClave, 2000, p. 855.

<sup>116</sup> 'Self' in the Analogizing the Body as Home Damasian sense previously outlined in the Theoretical Issues of the Chapter One.

comparable to Sheets-Johnstone (1999) and her research and phenomenological analysis of kinaesthetic consciousness in the primacy of movement.<sup>117</sup>

Sheets-Johnstone asserts that a return to the source of experience, or more precisely, to our embodied selves *in* experience, demonstrates how movement is the motor and primal sense of being alive and making meaning of the aliveness (p. 132). This, of course, resonates with Merleau-Ponty's separation of the body's role and function as necessities to bring its three dimensional existence into an expression of being. Thus, this was a place where phenomenological research directly guided the production of my field study, and offered a place to productively link theoretical work to Lecoq's pedagogy.

### **In-Class Study: Day One**

*Day 1: I arrived early to meet and briefly speak with the classroom teacher before the morning announcements and class arrived. Almost immediately she (Teacher 'A') began to identify the 'problem' students ... I knew Teacher A was trying to prepare me for them—assuming that I would want to know so-and-so's learning disability, the class strengths and weaknesses. I could feel myself becoming anxious—I had decided, prior to arriving at the school, that I actually did not need to know their names, countries of origin, how long they had been in Canada, or the present status of their immigration. I felt these 'information's' would frame the student and the idea of who they were scholastically—even before I actually met them.* (Data field notes: October 30, 2012)

I decided to lead a series of awakening to movement exercises to help students identify the body in space through motion. As human beings, we naturally project our physical selves into the

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<sup>117</sup> In her book 'The Primacy of Movement', Sheets-Johnstone acknowledges philosopher Algis Mickunas (1974) who first used the title and concept in a brief article of the same name. Sheets-Johnstone writes that her work was "not taken up in conjunction with Mickunas's article (nor did I realize my appropriation of *his* title until after the fact)". See Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p. 131.

three dimensions of space (e.g., height, width, and depth) when we stand, move, and extend our limbs (Goldman, 1991, p. 1). We make patterns with our use of space that is a repetition of physical dimensions and restrictions, within perimetric boundaries. These patterns exist whether we are aware of them or not. Ultimately, when we stay within certain spatial configurations we recognize them as patterns of movement particular to each individual. To some degree, the expanse or limit of movements has a role in defining “who” we are to ourselves and to others (Lecoq, 2000; Goldman, 1999, p. 5).<sup>118</sup>

## **Two Introductory Body Exercises**

*Sensing they were beginning to fidget I asked them to stand and make a circle. Standing in a circle was a feat in and of itself. That is to say, the group was standing in what vaguely resembled a sphere but it was not a circle. In hindsight I think this was their way of hiding or rather how standing opposite one another in a circled formation exposed them ... a self-consciousness of being ‘seen’ by their classmates.* (Data field notes: October 30, 2012)

To begin the movement exercises, I invited the students to stand up and make a large circle around the room. What was immediately noticeable was how many found it difficult to stand alone, beside their peers, while facing another across the circle. I could tell they were feeling self-conscious, exposed by the eyes of others. As a result, there was a lot of nervous laughter, giggling, fidgeting, and chatter. I welcomed these outbursts! They indicated, to me, a sense of anticipation, excitement and eagerness—a happening.

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<sup>118</sup> In her book called *The Geometry of Movement: A Study of the Structure of Communication*, author Ellen Goldman suggests that space and spatial configurations play a part in determining the extent and limits of “communication pathways”. See Goldman, 1999, p. 5.

My time in the ELL classroom was restricted to one period of 70 minutes in length. This limited time span absolutely influenced the design and arc of my bi-weekly visits. I needed to ensure that each of the steps provided the students with sufficient information to build upon the next. This direct and clear approach was especially necessary, given that I was bringing in an out-of-context use of applied theatre techniques to a classroom space. There is sufficient “pre-mask” bodywork that needs to occur before beginning the actual neutral mask (NM) focus of the work. It was unreasonable to think I could begin neutral mask work without adequately preparing the students with the necessary physical vocabulary.

Therefore, the focus the first two weeks was on introducing movement exercises as a way to begin corporeal work, work that would rely on tacit knowledge. This tacit knowledge in turn would demonstrate how language momentum begins and that a communication of language already exists within the body. The students needed this foundation of sensorial body awareness, and it was also essential to the study. Only after could I gradually introduce the neutral mask with instruction on how to wear and to *be* in the mask.

The key element for the entire study was to teach the students how to resist imposing gesture or movement typically associated with speaking and language. Adhering to its original theatre-based actors’ training purpose, I wanted these newcomer students to experience the body in a state of ‘non-knowing.’ This non-knowing allows for a sense of suspension (or, open awareness) into the rediscovery of how we come to know. It draws upon the body-self, informed by gender, culture, height, weight, dis/ability, maternal language, and even name.

Thus, in the short term of my In-class field study, I hoped to demonstrate the neutral mask as an embodying process for learning (Figures 3:7-3:15). The longer-term goal was that it could be incorporated in mainstream education language learning to help demystify bodies of

difference and the socially imposed stigmas placed upon them—or, for that matter, the personal parameters one places on one's own body. As I describe in the following sections, titled “Strings” and “Shapes,” I briefly outline two introductory body exercises, modified from Lecoquian technique, that were used in the study.

### *Strings*

The exercise titled “Strings” asks students to imagine a long invisible thread attached to a part of their body, such as a big toe, the top of their head, or the hip, for example. In each instance, movement initiates by the body part pulled by the imaginary string. For instances, students are asked to imagine the string pulled from the front (toe), the ceiling (head), or sideways (hip)—what would the movement that corresponds with that pull feel like? How would that motivate or alter your walk? It is a fun exercise because it takes something we do every day as able-bodied humans and simplifies it into elementary steps. Of course, upsetting the string pull in a direction uncommon for the allocated body part disrupts its commonly associated movement. By focusing attention on the sensation of the thread, the person drops his or her attention from *thinking* about movement and then focuses on *doing* the movement.

Isolating the body part in this manner becomes a way to disrupt (intentionally) unique corporeal idiosyncrasies. It reacquaints one's self with the simplicity of moving the body differently than normal. Although I did not speak of gender, the topic presented itself as the participants identified stances and gestures as typically “girl” moves or “boy” moves, in terms of, for example, how a hip angled far to the left and right, an arm held or positioned, a joint relaxed. I was pleased that most would attempt to try to imitate and represent the other as this signified a degree of surrender to the exercise. Courageously, one boy who was imagining the string pulling from either hip began to walk around the room swaying waist area from side to side. The more he

surrendered to the movement, the freer and more natural it became. His classmates, however, overcome with laughter, told him he looked like a “girl.” In the eyes of the others, this string pull made him appear effeminate. So deeply invested was he in embodying the hip string that the boy was completely unaware of what it looked like to those watching. The instant he felt the others eyes upon him, his peers who had also noticed the physical transformation of how they understood him to be, he stopped the exercise and laughed aloud together with the others.

### *Shapes*

The “Shapes” exercise had a different bifurcated purpose from Strings: first, shapes allow participants to begin to see the body objectively and second, to become more aware of the presence of the bodies in the room. As the name of the exercise suggests, the exercise asks that the participants actually locate the shapes, such as a rectangle for the thigh, a circle for a joint, oval for the face and so forth, in their own bodies and on one another. Something rather unexpected occurred when I asked them to pair up with a partner. Where it was relatively easy to blurt out shapes in the larger group, the closer face-to-face proximity to their fellow classmate created tension and awkwardness.

At first, I thought the group was losing focus and needed a break, or perhaps they were uninterested in the exercise. Two boys completely abandoned the exercise, one to go check his cell phone, and the other to scribble on the blackboard. My initial response was to bring order, to get them back on track. I also recall feeling rather displeased that they were wandering—not only away from the circle, but also from the exercise. Then it occurred to me that the exercise was eliciting this response. The boys were not alone; two of the girls who had teamed up were hysterically laughing while the other boy duo had begun to re-enact martial art moves as if in a

warrior battle. So, I transformed the exercise by getting out a large roll of white drawing paper and spreading it across the circle. I plunked down a huge box of coloured markers as well. The group gathered around and I asked them to work collectively to draw the body comprised only of shapes. Eager to mark up the paper each of them began to contribute shapes to recreate the form of a human being. They even began to include details such as knuckles, toe and finger joints as well as including lines to represent the ribs. The colourfully animated drawing began to resemble a human body, all except for the genderless private parts. They each explained why they chose the shapes they did, and those they agreed on versus those they did not, like the nose. For some it was a circle shape for others it was a triangle. As we sat looking at the body of shapes, I asked them why it was easier to draw them then to locate them on our actual bodies of the previous exercise. Amidst snorts of laughter and whispers, the boy previously likened to a girl in the Strings exercise offered that it was funny to think and imagine the shapes they could not see. The more we discussed how the shapes related to those found in the body, the closer we got to the excluded shapes—or as one girl called it, the “wrong parts.” I noticed two of the girls became very solemn as the others jokingly disputed the shape of the penis, breasts and vagina; one girl said—with great conviction—that these were not things to be discussed. The room grew quiet as these, her words of authority, brought the discussion and the exercise to a screeching halt—one of the many moments of significant challenges when working with the body, so I quickly found out.

### **“Teacher”**

*At the end of the class, both Teacher A and Teacher B came to speak to me about what they had thought of the class. I must note that only Teacher B partook in my class activities with*

*the students. Teacher A was absent for almost the whole hour and only returned to see us sitting in the ‘wrap up’ circle. Teacher B shared how incredible it was how the group sat and followed the exercises to the degree that they had. Teacher A couldn’t believe that they actually sat on the floor –impressed that the students were just as focused as when she had left the room at the beginning of the period. Teacher B offered it was a testament to my teaching ability, where I corrected him saying it was more a testament to Jacques Lecoq’s intriguing pedagogy. (Data field notes: November 2, 2012)*

With the In-class study, I experienced teacher expectations from another perspective in my role as research-facilitator of the workshop. Each day, I met with the two ELL classroom teachers before and after the In-class workshop sessions. We used this time as a way of checking-in. They helped me prepare the room by clearing tables/chairs, and transforming the space; later, we debriefed on what had transpired during the period. I welcomed their active participation and enthusiasm and even more, their desire to partake in the mask/movement exercises. They enthusiastically shared an interest in broadening classroom instructional strategies, as derived from my non-traditional teaching and learning practices of applied theatre techniques.

Yet once we began, their presence in the workshops seemed to contribute to a sense of confusion—not so much for the students, but rather, for the teachers themselves. They wondered if they were to respond to students questions, or continue to monitor the classroom parameters they had established—that I (as visitor) was not aware, or were they to follow my new set of parameters? They asked if they were to ignore behaviour from challenging students—a rapport and relationships they had established well before my arrival. For the sake of the study, they thought perhaps I would prefer they pretend they too were students partaking in the workshop. From what I could surmise, I felt their role as the teacher came into question.

After the initial sessions, by their own accord, first the one teacher and then the other ceased to partake in any of the movement work, preferring to use the time otherwise. Although I had not included the teachers' participation or focus in the field-study, it was certainly a significant hiccup that surfaced as result of *doing* field research versus the theorizing of everyone's place and roles.

From a critical pedagogy perspective, McLaren (1998) reminds us the primary design of teacher education and programs are to work within the system; moreover, they seek to assist student development that adheres to the larger social order (p.1). I began to think about pre-service teacher training and, as Jim Cummins (2009) argues, how ELL education continues to remain a specialized focus acquired through additional qualification (AQ) courses. Although there is extensive attention paid to diversity, difference, equity, and equality in pre-service, "we are still operating with the assumption of the generic student and the generic classroom out there" (J. Cummins, personal communication, May 6, 2009). This is not meant to disparage the teachers in my study, but rather to emphasize how my less than orthodox methods—originating outside an institutionalized system of schooling—took on disproportionate dimensions in relation to "the values, ideologies, and structuring principles" of "directives, imperatives, and rules" shaped by the systemic institutional politics of schooling (McLaren 1998, p. 221). I felt this raised a very real dilemma about how an alternative embodied pedagogy fits into mainstream education. To what degree do their modifications need amending in order to not only tolerate the structure of schooling, but also be effectively functional? Is the supplemental program to ELL that I am proposing something that needs preparation before it can be included in teachers' pre-service training? Or is it similar to the Settlement Workers' in the Schools (SWIS) programming, which comes into schools from the outside?

Additionally, by virtue of being at the front of the class and leading the exercises, I became the teacher. Even more importantly, I felt the students needed me to *be* the teacher. Conceptually speaking, McLaren relates the distribution of teacher/student roles in a classroom setting to that of the dominant social paradigm—and its division of dominant/subordinate positioning (1998, p. 232). McLaren claims: “The teacher performs a social function that is never innocent,” where classroom practices and pedagogical discourses factor into the makings of these relationships and (I would add) determine the dynamics of interaction between the assignments of these roles (p. 234). I possessed the knowledge insofar as I knew the method, but the knowing of the experience lay within each student’s unique, subjective knowledge. I wanted the participants, as critical agents, to question the work. I wanted them to recognize how the content of my exercises were visibly and methodologically different from that of a verbal-grammar focus. More importantly, I wanted them to see that the form was a result of their expression—not simply a fulfilling of the assigned task. I realized there was a gap between knowing these expectations, or rather, knowing I was asking these things of them.

With each visit, I sensed how my distinctly different approach to English language learning not only confused the space, but also the expectations contained within that space. Thus, for the newcomer students, I could feel how maintaining the frameworks of recognizable student/teacher roles took on great significance. My becoming the teacher in the context of how they generally understood that role helped facilitate their role as student. In regards to my purpose there, paradoxes such as this would continue to contribute to the confusion of my alternative learning objectives. That is to say, the imposition of traditional pedagogical structures, not necessarily conducive to the framework I was proposing, was a source of confusion that would continue to repeat itself in different forms, as in the students’ levels of participation.

## Participation

*I felt it was time to try to move the body in different ‘states of being’ (anger, timid, happy) around the space. As I asked, the students to move they all began to converge towards me. A lot of chatter and bumping into one another followed ... they were having great difficulty executing the simple task of quietly walking around the room. I realized how this was creating such awkward tension—a paradoxical space, i.e. in the silence of their speaking bodies walking around a language-learning classroom ...I think it was very unsettling for some students. They did not know why I was asking this of them and it was definitely different from what they were accustomed to in ELL.* (Data field notes: November 2, 2012)

At the Sartori Centro, I had found a way to familiarize the strange of the unfamiliar learning content and method of instruction. However, unlike the mask master class where, for the most part, participants openly expressed their opinion and disapprovals of the learning and instruction methodologies, any criticisms or displeasure that arose in my ELL In-class field study were less conspicuous. I attributed the newcomer students’ seeming compliance to my less-than-traditional Lecoquian methods, to their age group, and to their school attendance/participation requirement. That is to say, the newcomer students were less vocal in sharing what they thought or how they felt about by my presence and alternative learning in their classroom. Furthermore, my out-of-context presence in their classroom made me more cognizant of the student teacher, newcomer-mainstream, subordinate-versus-dominant culture binaries. The imbalance affected what I was asking of them in terms of their acceptance and cooperative participation, as approved by their teacher and principal for their integration benefit.

### **The Out-of-Context Problem: *point de repère (point of reference)***

*On my subway ride back (from the school), I realized how much context was missing in the leap from a drama focused classroom to one of English language learning. It's as though in the former setting, everyone knows or silently agrees to the directions and possibilities the teaching and learning may go. Here, the altering of the space in the way of removal of desks and chairs, not using pen/paper/blackboard or books, and especially requesting verbal silence in a setting that is practically all about speaking, completely disrupted the space, the participants, the roles, objectives and so on. It's almost as though when everyone knows what they are supposed to be learning, set-up in the familiarities of how that learning is supposed to take place, the understanding of the learning allowed for the learning to take place. By troubling the space to the degree that I had, did not usher in a sense of creativity and possibility but more a sense of disrupted confusion.* (Data field notes: October 30, 2012)

By the third In-class workshop with the newcomer students, I began to notice behavioural signs—acting up, speaking out, class disruption, wandering focus, and in one instance, inappropriate classroom language and conduct. I attributed these to the less-than-structured approach to instruction and the ensuing consequences. The lack of a prior embodied learning or body awareness had no point of reference and thus, to some degree, obscured the intent of my lessons. I realized that I was dealing with an out-of-context problem.

Although, I was cognizant of this possible result when designing the field studies, actually encountering the nondescript stares, fidgeting, awkwardness, silence, inhibitions and so forth of my participants was another matter. From the very moment that I had them sit in a circle on the floor of their classroom—which in itself was an odd experience for the newcomer students. This

prompted forms of resistance, which two regular classroom teachers identified as “behaviour.”

Ultimately, what proved challenging was how the disruption of their ELL space impacted the actual lessons, almost preventing ease or naturalness of students *being* in their bodies—ironically, the very purpose of my field exploration—the body in language.

### **Lab Rat**

*I asked for a volunteer and a girl quickly jumped up to join me at the front of the class.*

*Within the first few steps of beginning the movement task I had asked her to help me demonstrate, she became incredibly self-conscious and promptly asked if she could sit back down. I agreed and asked if there was anyone else who might want to join me. Afterwards it occurred to me that the girl, seized by self-consciousness, was intrigued by the idea of the exercise but once she joined me at the front of the class, it proved to be too much, i.e. conflicted by the desire to do the exercise and the awkwardness of how moving would make her look in front of her peers.* (Data field notes: November 14, 2012)

In a question and answer debriefing on the final day of the In-class study, I invited the students to share their thoughts—good and bad—of our past weeks together. I disclosed the full extent of my observing embodied perspectives in the English-language learning of their settlement integration. I wanted to know how they felt that I had not shared this aspect of the study with them from the beginning. Several thought it mysterious and funny, like I was a spy, but others understood why it was best to keep this information a secret. One student in particular, a thoughtful and bright young man assessed at the ELD (English Learning Development) level communicated his response through a fellow classmate of the same cultural background. Observing his body language and the lengthy manner in which he replied, I could tell that he was very articulate in his heritage language. Yet in the raw English translation of his peer, he

communicated that he felt tricked, deceived, like a rat in a laboratory. I realized my study had much larger challenges than merely introducing movement exercises to assist in the embodiment of language. Longstanding, steadfast learning frameworks in place created tensions within tensions that, in the end succeeded in adding another level of confusion to the research.

The ‘lab-rat’ answer troubled me because it was the exact opposite of what I had intended with the study. It also made me reflect upon the silent cultural context that enveloped social intersectionality studies. I felt I had facilitated a culturally sensitive, fun-filled applied program that explored the connection between verbal language expression and kinetic movement behind language motivation.<sup>119</sup> Here, this one student interpreted my study otherwise.

It is worth noting that of the two studies, the In-Class field study better addressed the research questions I had initially set out to explore. Once the study was completed, I found myself thinking of Kathleen Gallagher’s (2008) concept of “porous methodology” (p. 72).<sup>120</sup> As consequence of unforeseeable events in one of her field studies, Gallagher had to rethink strategies that employed a specific aspect of the study otherwise. In my case, it is more of a Swiss cheese metaphor in that there were several “holes” (or gaps, as previously referred to) that needed tending to in order for me to bring the study full circle. Here it is worth returning to my three research questions: on improving means of transition and integration for NTCY, through modified Lecoquian NM techniques, and for the student to understand how an embodied engagement might assist them in their integration. In my In-class study field study, my framework collided with the existing ones of mainstream education, which resulted in a series of tensions between the observed/stated curriculum and how it needs to be challenged:

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<sup>119</sup> A human participants’ research ethics requirement, letters of consent were prepared for both teachers and students alike. They could absolutely choose not to partake in the In-class

<sup>120</sup> Gallagher writes “Our porous methodology, as I came to call it, was driven often enough by the explicit and immediate needs in the field [...] with action research’s agenda for change.” I related to this analogy of porous methodology as it implies the attempt to create a secure framework when designing a field study with the ability to surrender when the actual experience of the field study come to life. As researcher, flexibility is necessary.

1. The Ontario Education language-acquisition policy and the Ontario Curriculum (grades 9 to 12) is designed in such a manner as to ensure new-to-English language learners receive the maximum opportunity to become proficient in English (Ontario Education, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2007). Challenge: Critical pedagogy theorists have identified the repercussive effects between dominant culture/subordinate culture and the power/knowledge relations (McLaren, 1998; Giroux, 1985; hooks, 1994; Freire, 1970).
2. Proficiency in the dominant language will help the individual student with social integration and self-expression (Ministry of Education, 2007). Challenge: Scholars have identified the notion of alterity in relation to linguistic practice (Hastings and Manning, 2004; Derrida, 1996; Freire, 1970).
3. Education generates discourse about inclusivity and the promotion of equality *vis-à-vis* race, class and gender politics of difference (hooks, 1994; Fuss, 1989; Cummins, 1989).  
Challenge: The inclusion of these discourses does not automatically translate into inclusivity (Graham and Slee, 2006).

Like a Russian *Matryoshka* doll, with its many layers of dolls-within-a-doll, I found that nestled within these facts lay well-argued theories with the potential to (inadvertently?) create or confuse other problems when put into practice. My In-class field study was not exempt from the unexpected complexities. Where critical pedagogy theories seek to break down identity politics of race, class and gender, the intersectionality of my (modified) Lecoquian neutral mask technique unexpectedly exposed them through the three dimensional, visible, embodied reality of physical flesh. I not only found myself confronted with these prevalent and culturally relevant concerns in education, but by shining a spotlight on students' bodies as well as asking them to

become aware of embodied *representations* of their bodies, my research actually summoned them into the room.

### **Discussing the Body in Education**

Befitting the complexity of my study and all the unforeseeable factors that arose, a quote from John Dewey reminded me: “[B]etween conception and bringing to birth there lies a long period of gestation” (Dewey, 1934, p. 75). By virtue of focusing directly on the body in the In-class study, my movement and neutral mask workshop magnified barriers of socio-cultural inequities. As though under a microscope, it called immediate attention to the visible difference of skin colour, body size and gender. This (already) difficult confrontation became more difficult by the lack of learning reference frame combined with the time constraint allotted my study. The sensorial nuances in the way of proprioceptive awareness I was trying to introduce were not only rushed, but also forced into symbolic representations expressed through linguistic meaning. Eugenio Barba (1991) suggests that the body is the visible part of the voice and speech. If so, then the inability to explore the body fully in language with my ELL students, and conversely, language meaning evolving from their bodies, resulted in embodied representations of linguistic meaning similar to the aforementioned (pp. 16-17) symbolic idea of anger expressed through stomping feet or air-pumping fists, for example. Partially this was due to my introducing of exercises and information not common to the ELL classroom. Additionally, the limited engagement did not lend itself to the building of trust, familiarity, comfort, and willingness—all basic elements necessary for creating interpersonal relationship, and even more significant to the work I sought to undertake. Confronted by the demands of this situation and study, I focused on the sensorimotor experience of being a body, knowledge learned from my Lecoq training.

In the short term, my study does not address or answer ubiquitous race, class, gender issues in the traditional sense of discussion and debate—herein lies one of several tensions in the brevity of this study, and one that absolutely gives me pause for reflection in the forthcoming chapter where I discuss the critical awareness of emergent themes post-field work. What I can offer via the somatic experience of donning the neutral-mask, is that it exposes the cultured, racial, and gendered body divisions of difference that can separate students. Yet at the same time, if paradoxically, it also demonstrated a shared biological being-in-the-world. Over a longer, less constrained, period I like to imagine that the ability to integrate, in a practical sense, this education of the body will occur through a deeper development of *disponibilité* (state of openness and freedom to receive). In other words, this state would serve to shorten the distance between how we discuss, identify, categorize and compartmentalize the body in language through *being* bodies in practice.

Delving further into the ways in which discussions of the academic body trickle down to influence education of the body—and conversely, the body in education—I returned to Maria Carozzi's (2005) article on the scholastic construction of incorporeal discourse, in which she asserts that scholarly discourse on the body merely produces “discourses related to other discourses” (p. 30). Carozzi argues that intellectualized theories of the body corroborate notions that, in effect, separate the body “from the rest of the bodily sensations” (p. 30). What I took away from this article was how body discourses speak to, about, and against the body, but not *from* the body (p. 27; Butler, 1993). This raises the question as to whether the discordant way in which Carozzi claims we are communicating about the body, in effect, *dis-embodies* the body in pedagogy—and specifically for my/her purposes, in relation to verbal acquisition of language learning.

To be clear, by virtue of being human, we are bodied beings. We are embodied, not dis-embodied, even if that language of dis-embodiment is evoked theoretically. When I write “dis-embodies,” I am using the prefix ‘dis’ to express the ways in which education moves us away from, as in creating of distance or separation of and, in relation to the body in teaching and learning practices.<sup>121</sup> Working towards an applied classroom practice, I then ask, by virtue of the body’s inability to speak, read and write in the literal sense, to what degree are “higher agents” (e.g., words, thinking, computers<sup>122</sup>) given precedence in school-related associations and activities (Carozzi , 2005, p. 29)? What may change if learning takes on a more somatic, embodying component?

### **Implications for Practice: Looking to Contemporary Research Practice**

How do we make education meaningful by making it critical, and how do we make it critical so as to make it emancipatory. (Giroux, 1983, p. 3)

As I have been describing, I too have been subject to Carozzi’s body-intellectualization claim—guilty of repeating dichotomous mind/body discourse learned (no doubt) over the course of my education. In recent decades, cognitive linguists, embodied philosophers and neuroscientists have been chipping away at the long-standing Cartesian binary to reshape how we understand the body (Lakoff, 1998; Johnson, 2007; Gallagher, 2005). These fields of research have provided me with a physiological framework to connect language to the physical experience. They help me recognize that to change the way in which the body is discussed, I need to articulate how the body is engaged *in the act* (Sinclair, 2005; Cooks and Warren, 2011; Ellsworth, 2005; Perry and Medina, 2011; McCafferty, 2000 my italics).

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<sup>121</sup> Lakoff and Johnson identify disembodiment as conceptual aspects that remain “contents of mind” yet “not crucially shaped or given any significant inferential content by the body.” See Lakoff and Johnson (1999) p. 37.

<sup>122</sup> Writing on computers and disembodiment, Amanda Sinclair raises the question of computer-led classrooms and the absence of physical bodies. See Sinclair (2005).

Shaun Gallagher (2005) offers:

Let us consider a little more closely the conscious awareness of one's own body. Is my body always intentionally present, that is, am I always conscious of my own body as an intentional object, or as part of an intentional state of affairs? The distinction between consciously *attending* to the body and being marginally *aware* of the body is important. It appears that sometimes we do attend specifically to some aspect or part of the body. In much of our everyday experience, and most of the time, however, our attention is directed away from the body, toward the environment or toward some project we are undertaking.

(p. 27 original italics)

This perspective well describes what I have hoped for in shaping and enacting my research—that, in the absence of verbal speech, the body in the mask would reduce the complexities of culture, gender, age, and scholastic competency, information that is often exchanged and evaluated through language, to instead allow for space to become aware and expand upon the collective social knowledge that we all share through movement. Obviously, inclusion of a supplemental such as this one does not expand English-language learning curricula in a traditional (verbal speech) sense. Rather, it asks for a renewed vision to take place, one that readdresses ELL curriculum to create conditions that integrate the social issues that arise for newcomer-to-Canada students with the language and not regard them as two separate entities—which also reiterates the mind/body dichotomies.

For instance, Lakoff and Johnson assert that the very same “neural mechanisms” employed in movement for perception also contributes to abstract meaning making (p.38). This is not only vital to how we collectively make sense, but also to how we share common sense. In addition, the respective works of David McNeill (1992) and Adam Kendon (2004) demonstrate how

gesture, language and speech are part of one mental system that operates in fundamentally different if complimentary ways. Whether we are conscious of it or not, physical actions such as to grasp, punch, and slap are derivatives of neural stimuli carried out through the motor system.

In other words, we are, all of us, constantly thinking through, with and from the body. As Rick Kemp's (2012) research on neuroscience and performance demonstrate, common biological experiences regarding perception, cognition, and expression "underlie and interact" in and among multiple cultural groups (p. 86).<sup>123</sup>

Our bodies of culture are our external representations comprised of stored knowledge, senses, and experience-memory, central to our everyday experience (Lecoq, 2000; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). To continue subsidizing the body from the higher agent of the mind, knowledge and language, serves to confine its exploration, its potential, its alternate contribution to learning (Carozzi, 2005, p. 29). If the Ministry and Boards of education, curriculum planners, and teachers can reassess why they are educating newcomer students, perhaps these educators can understand how alternative aspects of ELL education might improve settlement beyond language integration (Davis Sumara, Luce-Kapler, 2008). The effectiveness of this approach in an ELL classroom is multifaceted; it seeks to simultaneously address acculturative issues and learning repercussions.

## **Conclusion**

My two field studies, and my experiences within them, exposed critical gaps between what I envisioned for my work in these locations and what actually transpired—I was breaking and covering a lot of new ground. Each location was necessary, for the Sartori Centro gave me a solid

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<sup>123</sup> Kemp's book covers a cross-section of embodied acting methods, techniques and styles. In this particular section I have quoted he makes parallels to Jacques Lecoq's theatre with neuroscience and the relationship between thought, physical action and language. See Kemp, pp. 75-92.

foundation in maskerology, and the In-Class allowed me to test out modified Lecoquian techniques. I had anticipated rough spots and prepared myself for the unexpected, but I did not always respond to some of the less-than-fluid moments that occurred in each study's execution. In the select field notes of this chapter, I also deliberately focused on the tensions that arose concerning the material, social dynamics, and overall comprehension of what I was attempting to do. Both studies in this respect especially helped engage thinking towards understanding the next necessary steps needed to bridge these gaps. Next, I will present some of the thinking—both the challenges and implications—necessary to further develop an applied body-supplemental practice in education.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Emerging Critical Awareness

In the last chapter, I described two field studies, designed to: a) help further inform the overall objective of the research through deepening an understanding about mask history and; b) pilot a body-supplemental approach in a mainstream ELL classroom. For this chapter, I now want to critically reflect on what I recognize was less successful—in the sense of accomplishing its intended purpose—however bountiful it was for the emergence of new learning narratives. In so doing, this chapter critically considers altered viewpoints on these key concerns that emerged because of the studies conducted in the field.

One concern in particular that underwrote the planning of the body-supplemental in the piloted mini-study was the need to consider more deeply what the exercises ask of the learner. Lecoq's methodology provokes the learner to engage in learning through methods that ask students to become aware of the learning—and themselves *in* the learning. Thomas Prattki, who taught at the Lecoq School after Lecoq's death in 1999, states: “When students have discovered the most important things for themselves [...] this technique undoubtedly [...] invites pupils to accept responsibility for themselves” (Murray, 2003, p.51).

One rather large caveat: this is not an intellectual *thinking* of the self in moment preceding, but rather the *being* in the moment. The School taught me how learning to *think* through the body awakens an integrated mind-body self-analysis in my learning that I am being present in and taking responsibility for my self as a self in the learning. The process develops a sense of self-observation, by attuning the student to his or her physiological feelings.

Here, I fell short of my intended goals. What is critical to this alternate, subtle process of learning was that incrementally, the use of NM at the Lecoq School was developing our sense of

self-awareness—in the exercises, in the training, in the School, in the social time, and always *through* our bodies. I was essentially hoping—perhaps naively—to include this component as a complete process of individual development by adding it to English language acquisition and proficiency learning. I now see how this is yet another dimension needing to be ‘built in’. Returning to core concepts like thinking in movement, movement epistemology, and body awareness to address them more, post-field study, I am seeking ways to expose the students to this possibility or potential of self-awareness as an essential aspect of language acquisition.

### **Thinking in Movement<sup>124</sup>**

It is one thing to theorize about the mind/body binary and the discourses on movement versus those of a perception of movement. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone’s (1999) advancements in consciousness research capture the sense of Lecoq’s work with her concept, “thinking in movement” (p. 483). By inserting the preposition “in” between thinking and movement, Sheets-Johnstone transforms the dichotomous mind/body rhetoric that continues to divide them:

Thinking in movement does not mean [...] thinking by means of movement or that her/his thoughts are being transcribed into movement. To think is first of all to be caught up in a dynamic flow; thinking is itself, by its very nature, kinetic. It moves forward, backward, digressively, quickly, slowly, narrowly, suddenly, hesitantly, blindly, confusedly, (and) penetratingly. (p. 486)

For example, not too long after the first week with my In-Class students, I sensed they had grasped an understanding in the way of expectations during my body-ELL visits. As result, they seemed to be a little more comfortable with my presence and less shy and inhibited about doing

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<sup>124</sup> I borrow *Thinking in Movement* from a chapter of the same title in Maxine Sheets-Johnstone’s ‘The Primacy of Movement’. Sheets-Johnstone draws from an even larger concept of Edmund Husserl’s (1989) “animate organisms” or “live things, beings that move”. See Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p. 483.

the movement exercises. Yet as they began to relax more, they also began to interpret and predetermine what was necessary for the work. There was an unspoken understanding that this was not difficult in the way that bookwork and English grammar was. For them, the thinking of the body was not really thinking in the traditional (cognitive) way of thinking.

In essence, the students were correct; however, what was difficult for the process of work was conveying how *not* to subordinate body thinking in relation to the minds. I remembered how the idea of these two types of thinking—now apparent to me—was revelatory as a young student at the Lecoq School. So I returned to Sheets-Johnstone’s “thinking in movement” as contextualized within a dance perspective. Her dance theory language, or rather, “kinetic bodily logos” corroborates Lecoq’s work, even though the direction of his pedagogy is in the realm of physical or visual theatre (p. 489). In both instances, thinking is not about movement, or determining the quality of movement; the thinking is occurring at the same time—it is the “non-separation” simultaneity of simultaneous thought-movement absorption (p. 485). Sheets-Johnstone, Lecoq and other scholars of embodied cognition consider the degree to which physical experience shapes mental concepts (Gendlin, 1962; Johnson, 2007; McNeill, 2000). We are all continuously thinking through, with and from the body. The complicity of the body in thought lays the groundwork for propositional thought, i.e. both are features of cognitive processes, regardless of whether they are communicated verbally or nonverbally (Johnson, 2007; Kemp, 2012).

The biggest hurdle to overcome was how Lecoq’s based body training differed vastly from my body-focus in an ELL classroom for newcomer youth. Of course I knew this (in theory) prior to beginning the field-study, but it literally left me speechless at times as I didn’t know how to proceed due to what felt was a great gulf of missing information. Reflecting back on the Strings

and Shapes exercises, I engaged students in the creation of a movement-to-language body-alphabet (Figure 4:1<sup>125</sup>) as a way to mobilize Lecoq's journey into the poetic body from the theatre to the English language-learning classroom. Here, we would discuss and draw the stick figures, and enact them in an attempt to embody the clean lines of the stick drawings (i.e., no contortions or impossible poses). I needed to create this bridge as a way 'in', to frame this abstract body concept with a practical exercise that would have meaning and make sense for the students.

At the Lecoq School, the soma is the total system for learning. It is not thinking of movement through scholarly epistemology versus ontology perspectives. In our training as young actors, the teaching and learning practices derive through action, the senses, and somatic experience, founded on the concept that the gathering of knowledge is through our physical movements in the world (Murray, 2003, p. 57; Felner, 1985, p. 148). In the In-Class study, this could not be the focus, as I was narrowing the scope of the body learning to address its role in language, and specifically, English acquisition. In addition, I could not work with the students as intensively as Lecoq did with me. As a researcher, I needed to take a step back and further refine my thinking, and in the process, further define the breadth of my NM, ELL and NTCY three themes. I considered the foundation of knowledge as the larger overarching source and perhaps constraint influencing the study.

## **Movement Epistemology**

Movement epistemology differs from the thinking in movement of Sheets-Johnstone in that it is the work of a "symbol-making" body, one that animates physical gestures to compliment or

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<sup>125</sup> The body-alphabet is a transposed exercise from the Lecoq School called *les 20 mouvements* (the 20 movements). In that context we are taught a series of complex movements and had to select and technically learn 20 of them in an order of our choosing. The order typically unfolded as a story told through the unique way in which we executed them through our individual bodies.

imitate thought and language (1999, p. 490). In this instance, the same laws of movement apply to those found in language. Random and/or abstract movement remains just that—unintelligible. I would go so far as to say that the pragmatic aspects of verbal language competence<sup>126</sup> share a corporeal equivalent in Lecoq's methodology (Felner, 1985, p. 150), or rather, that the critical features that motivate human action to make meaning context, content, and sense (syntax) are all mediated by semiotic mechanisms of tools and signs. They are *meaning-filled*, the discourse visible as an intellectual exercise (Vygotsky, 1978).

Diverseness aside, there is a commonly followed epistemological trajectory to all our shared collective knowing and understanding, Johnson offers:

Our capacity to grasp meanings, and our capacity for reasoning, depends on our conscious use of symbolic representations in the mind that somehow can relate to things outside the mind. These symbolic representations (usually thought of as concepts) are organized into meaningful propositional structures via formal rules of syntax, and then the propositions are organized into thoughts and arguments via formal rules of logic. (Johnson, 2007 p. 8)

What Johnson captures here is the essence of coexistence and intersubjectivity. He writes, “We inhabit a shared world, and we share meaning from the start” (Johnson, 2007, p. 5). Thus, arguably, our exchange of movements follow and are governed by this same epistemological structure (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p. 226).

Many language scholars theorize speech as the intellectual property of epistemic modality, a cognitive perspective of a functional process (Nuyts, 2001; Kiefer, Ferenc. 1986). In the context of my study, the term cognitive<sup>127</sup> does not adhere to the same philosophic meaning, as it

<sup>126</sup> Five pragmatic aspects of language according to Susanne Langer: phonetic (knowledge of the sound-symbol relationships), semantic (knowledge of the word labels that specify concepts and semantic networks), syntactic (knowledge of the rule system or grammar for using a language), morphemic (knowledge of word structure), and pragmatic (knowledge or awareness of language is used differently in different situations or settings). See Langer, 1957.

<sup>127</sup> The earliest entries for the word "cognitive" in the OED take it to mean roughly *pertaining to the action or process of knowing*.

is commonly associated to the psyche of the mind. After all, the mind is in the brain, which is also one of the largest organs *in* the organism of the body. There is knowledge in self-movement that informs our living both literally and epistemologically (Sheets-Johnstone, 1998, p. 262). Similar to thinking movement, this research examines how the body and brain shape embodied cognition (Lakoff, 1999, p. 16; Gallagher, 2005, p. 65).

With my In-Class study, I sought to explore what Mark Johnson (2007) refers to as the “nonconscious” gaps—the doing before the thinking of the doing—to see how embodied meaning making contributes to knowing language (p. 31). This concept of “nonconscious” has recurred in my research studies, stated as, for example, non-thinking or non-psychological instead (Johnstone, 1999; Felner, 1985). What each phrase boils down to is that the body, as a thinking or cognitive entity has a language of movement that is more than something merely added to help speech along.

Lecoq’s pedagogy reorders thought; he advocates the reordering of cognitive structures as the occurrence of or ground for movement (Felner, 1985, pp. 148-149). In an interview on Jacques Lecoq’s pedagogy alumnus Giovanni Fusetti (now Director of the Helikos International Theatre School) declared, “[e]verything starts with the body” (Fusetti and Wilson, 2002). The focus is on the ‘body before words/ words of the body,’ in which movement and gesture are intrinsic parts of language that often occur without our even knowing it, such as a subtle hands gesture in speech emphasis, or facial reactions when listening to a friend recount a story. These are often involuntary movements, which, of course, when we become aware of them or they pointed out to us, we can, consciously choose to control motor movements (Gallagher, 2005, p. 110). Yet they do not end there. Cognitive science and specifically the research of Antonio

Damasio (2010) correlate the conscious control of motor movement with the neural basis of consciousness, i.e. how the brain constructs the conscious mind (p. 7).

My point is that, our bodies and our embodied experience are the foremost perceptual aspect of and within our living situations (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p. 218). Pedantically speaking, the body senses and interacts primarily as bodies in the gathering, storing, creating, and supply for knowledge meaning making. Eugene Gendlin (2003) writes:

Our bodies sense themselves in living in our situations. Our bodies do our living. Our bodies are interactions in the environment; they interact as bodies, not just through the five senses. We do not lurk behind a partition with five peepholes" (p. 102).

The primacy of this phenomenon undermines theories that presuppose body functions through the purview of the mind. As this research shows, these are deceptive perceptions that actually continue to *disembody* it (Shapiro, 1999; Johnson, 2007, p. 2; Damasio, 2010).

Lecoq's mimetic body-to-language theory challenges the authority and logic of Cartesian or Kantian traditional epistemological models but Lecoq was not opposed to the mind or cognition (Lang, 2011, p. 77). On closer inspection, his movement work follows an epistemic structure. Movement epistemology is the work of a "symbol-making" body, of animating physical gestures to complement or imitate thought and language (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p. 490). In this instance, the same laws of movement apply to those found in language. That is, the critical semiotic mechanisms of meaning-making context, content, and sense (syntax) as inextricable features of kinaesthetic consciousness (thinking movement) replicate themselves in Lecoq's training, except the discourse is visible (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999).

## Body Self-Awareness

In *Embodied Acting* (2012) author Rick Kemp writes, “Descartes was the first modern philosopher to identify the mind with consciousness and self-awareness and to distinguish it from the material substance of the body” (p. 2). As result of the pilot body-supplemental, I began to think about the self-consciousness of my ELL student participants. I thought about how my attempts to get them to work with their bodies outside of traditional and/or even acceptable body-ways<sup>128</sup> elicited giggles, distracted focus, and in some instances, an unwillingness to let go and allow for the space of *disponibilité*. I thought back to my writing prior to the In-Class field study and the ways the body is more typically explored or acknowledged in mainstream education. Is there was a better way to include a phenomenological body into pedagogical practices—something that might assist the development of the body as a subject in a language-learning context that often insists on objectivity?

For instance, in the six sections that make up the first chapter of *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), Merleau-Ponty suggests that humans inhabit being-in-the-world through the body, outside the frame of the mind’s interpretation. Listed in an order describing pertinent features in and from which we *are* our bodies—from the body’s point of view—Merleau-Ponty explicitly details individual areas articulating how they contribute and bring the body into being. These include the body as mechanism, as psychology, motility, synthesis, sexuality, expression and eventually, the body and speech. I include “eventually” before speech, as I believe the order arrangement is a series of steps in functionality, one building or assisting the one preceding.

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<sup>128</sup> What I mean by traditional or acceptable body-ways, is the manner in which discussion of the body is allowed in education. It can be viewed and discussed for scientific and health purposes, it can be applied through sports or the performing arts, but outside these parameters, an unstructured, experiential, space for *beingness* surrender, seems to invite other equally difficult discourses that blur the lines. In particular I am thinking about what Megan Boler (1999) calls the “politics of emotional expression” in schools and the risks of empathy in pedagogy as a site of social control. See Boler p. 17.

Several difficulties immediately present themselves with the compartmentalized analyses of Merleau-Ponty that, I believe, keep phenomenology on the periphery of academic praxis. First, the phenomenal field is not an actual space nor is it an imagined place, but one of transcendence (that, paradoxically, implicates the Cartesian order). Thus, to view the body in ELL or education through a phenomenological lens may present a variety of practical problems, but it could also open up the possibility of exploring embodied experience in relation to teaching and learning. Elizabeth Ellsworth (2005), for example, refers to the “experience of the learning self,” or how “the embodied self” is one that “emerges from the experience of learning as a non-linguistic event, the experience of knowledge and self as simultaneously in the making, can even be said to pre-exist cognition” (p. 2). Our bodies, much like learning, curricula, the classroom and education, share living, breathing, evolving processes. Additionally, curricula’s knowledge-based framework and the physical structure of the human organism in education in some respects resemble the mind/body dichotomy. So how is education nurturing growing bodies within and according to the systematic parameters of book-thinking material and strategies designed to scaffold learning trajectories in schools? Does the learning of curricula resemble what Merleau-Ponty’s ontology rallied against? That is to say, is the body as object more conducive to how we learn in the system? Could education embrace the body as subject and all the individual perspectives that comes with the experience of *beingness*?

What Merleau-Ponty theorized about the body’s ability to convert motor essence into vocal form, Lecoq sought to put into practical application (1962, p. 181). Given how my research adheres to a Lecoquian perspective and not a linguistic one, it takes an epistemic-turn as it observes Lecoq’s view that the movements we make in the world activate or put thought and speech into motion (Lecoq, 2000). According to Lecoq, the body is the mimetic, visible impulse

for voice from which sound and speech emerge (Barba, 1985, p. 53). Unfortunately, “mime” as an applied practice has become synonymous with the silent, white make-up faced unitard-clad performer gesticulating speech to compensate for the absence of verbal communication. This mime cliché is not the mime studied at the Lecoq School. As students learning about mime (pronounced “meem”), we learnt more about embodying figures of speech,<sup>129</sup> remaining closer to the corporeal emblematic mimetic origins. Mime in its truest sense “lives in the depths of silence, where gesture does not replace words” (Bradby, 2006, p. 68). To mime is to deepen the connection with hidden meaning, to search beyond the obvious for the discovery of our individual understandings. It avoids all *a priori* meanings based on preconceptual sensorimotor, feelings and visceral experiencing of the world (Johnson, 1987, p. 12). From an embodied cognition perspective, Shaun Gallagher (2005) would refer to this similar phenomenon as “oral motility,” where speech evolves a sophisticated form of gesturally induced forms of movement that lay the groundwork for speech to emerge (p. 107). Language is a modality of body-generated movements.

The world, including the universe of the classroom makes impressions on the body. These impressions inspire gestures, which the student begins to translate into understanding. Can mime become “meem?” In the next sections, I explore how this level of body awareness may assist the newcomer student in their language learning experience.

## **CRITICAL DISCUSSION**

### **Language in the Body**

Language has a unique relationship with the body and self-identity. This body-to-language relationship is not isolated to a subjective experience of self, but rather, is susceptible to external

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<sup>129</sup> ‘figure’ as in semiotic representation and ‘figure of speech’ of language expression in a non-literal sense

factors influencing ones perception and reception (Derrida, 1996; Shilling, 2003). We see this confirmed by Bourdieu who tells us how the habitus, located within the body, implicates every aspect of embodiment (1984, p. 190). Equally, McLaren (1998) articulates the “enfleshed” dimension of student identity as being very much at the core of subjectivity—“as language” (p. 244).

Learning a new language not only asks that the newcomer student transform how they express themselves through the distinctiveness of their mother tongue, but also how the new form of language expression should be performed through the instrument of the body. Viewed from this perspective, I seek to determine if learning the English language can administer knowledge without the “bodily participation” of physical capital (Shilling, 2003, p. 111).

My research argues that the current focus in the structuring of ELL curriculum is fraught with elements that (unintentionally) implicate the student in (inconspicuous) ways beyond the compartmentalized approach to acquisition and proficiency. I believe instruction of new language learning requires an additional process—a supplemental—that exceeds the more typical, standard modes of learning core subjects. Take, for example, the lessons of math or geography class. Here, students’ participatory engagement in the learning extends insofar as it is a process of acquiring a particular knowledge. Math or geography can be incorporated into applied practice, but they do not alter identity in the way of what Merleau-Ponty called beingness, nor do they reveal being-in-the-world (1962, p. xiv). This is a revealing outside the realm of conscious existence, but rather situated at the level of lived experience. To be clear, I am not implying that the learning of core subjects occur in a vacuum. My point being, that they exist as episteme where the curriculum certainly encourages various strategies of learning participation from the student, however the learning engagement is not contingent or recognized

by how the student is required to alter a sense of self (voice/speech) in a presentation of math and/or geography in comparison with the performance of English.<sup>130</sup> Similar to Merleau-Ponty, Lecoq believed that the body in experience is the essential “expressive space” from which the reveal is perceived and mediated in the world. Thus, if the body, is the “general medium for having a world”, a precursor that conceives of expression and speech, would it not be our physical experiences of the world that shape the structure of thought and for speech (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 p. 169; Kemp, 2012, p. 78; Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p. 38)?

Without a doubt, this is a highly contested debate about the validity or awareness of the pre-objective, pre-reflexive or even pre-symbolic originating as sensorimotor experience in the body—an experience that then lays the groundwork for the development of conceptual thought (Kemp, 2012, p. 89). This approach to language learning, explicitly designed to assist in newcomer youths’ settlement integration, examines the role of the body’s *beingness* in the formation of self-expression that is not reliant solely on voice and verbal language.

### **Canadian-izing**

Given the increasing diversity of the Canadian schools’ student demographic and thus, a growth in learners new to English, education is facing a) an ongoing, not a temporary situation of stress on the system, and b) ELL classrooms are becoming increasingly, albeit invisibly, crash course in what I would call “Canadianizing” students:

One of the core fundamental principles of learning is that learning taps into what or builds on what students already know. And so if you’re operating from a kind of transmission model or a Freirian banking model where my job as the teacher is to take the curriculum, get it into my head, get it into the kids’ heads, well you’re not going to worry about what

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<sup>130</sup> That is of course, minus testing, i.e. a cognitive evaluation

they know, who they are, and it's totally screwed up in terms of learning....so basically within school systems, we have diversity, we have multiple religions, we have multiple cultures, language, and these can be something that enriches the school system incredibly. They can also be sources of conflicts. We need people who know who to deal with those issues; we need people that have knowledge base requirements to provide inspirational leadership in these situations. There's got to be a vision that goes beyond just what's in the curriculum. (J. Cummins, personal communication, March 2009)<sup>131</sup>

Cummins' concerns gesture to a larger discussion on the difference between the scope of pedagogy and the practice of teaching, and how teaching further fragments into applied processes of instruction, training, conditioning, or, as particular to my study, indoctrinating (McLaren, 1998; Simon, 1987; Green, 1964/1965). That is to say, a slight critical shift in perspective and could the well-intentioned organization of the provincial ELL documents not resemble a quasi-indoctrinating shortcut on how to be Canadian? As the indoctrinated subject, the newcomer student quickly learns that the fastest means to obtain the more advantageous social standing is largely dependent on how they succeed in acquiring English language proficiency. Additionally, the fine lines between teaching, transmission and enculturation precariously negotiate the location from which subordinate voices speak—or not. In *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1994), bell hooks interprets this as a form of “essentialism” (p. 77).

Drawing from Diana Fuss’s (1989) *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference*, hooks focuses on a common feature of dominant institutional settings: how they imitate

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<sup>131</sup> This interview was part my Master's degree (MA) field study (2007) Titled **Making-Meaning through Movement: Theatre Pedagogy for English Language Learning in Refugee Youth Settlement** (2009). I explored kinaesthetic theatre applications for ELL with a focus on forced migration of the refugee student. I interviewed two professionals, Natalie Genevra (pseudonym) a high school educator in an urban high school in the city and Jim Cummins a leading scholar in second language education programming at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. Their works reflect opposite ends of the same spectrum concerning newcomers to Canada and the learning of English. Each has addressed the complexities and politics of Ministry run education, the inconsistent focus set by the administration within individual schools, and the inevitable trickle-down effect to the overwhelmed ELL classroom. Including interview research to balance the theoretical comparative/contrastive conceptual frame of this thesis, my participants' accounts confirm my observations and experiences as an artist educator, on the complex and very realistic challenges and obstacles facing this ever-changing field in education. See Pascetta (2009).

“paradigms for asserting subjectivity”—reflective of the domineering control that upholds it (p. 81). In the ELL classroom, the common feature of the English language becomes both the tool and the weapon, where the curriculum synonymously connects what a student knows with and how they are scholastically identified (Sakurai, 1998, pp. 40-44). This link ignites discussion on the politics of identity and visual culture, on the *difference* of bodies that encounter the *same* in the English language of a learning environment. Additionally, the inherent complexities this debate creates when *another* language—or by Susanne Langer’s (1957) definition “the most mysterious product of the human mind,”—evolves from the organisms body-of-culture (p. 103; Damasio, 1999, p. 40). Add to this the notion that maternal language has not only been formed and developed in the body-of-cultural origin, but also holds a deeper tie in relationship to birth, culture, nationality and citizenship (Derrida, 1998, p.13). Erith Jaffe-Berg’s (2009) study on the multilingualism of performance parallels language to the wearing of the “ultimate costume,” implying that language is not merely a covering; it is something that is literally embodied (p. 9). Yet, how about when the maternal language also holds little currency in the dominant *lingua franca* of capital (Freire, 2009; Bourdieu, 1993)? Certainly, through schooling, English-language acquisition and proficiency are attainable, but what body-self identifications, such as colour of skin and gender, get reinforced by an accent-nuanced English, and then continue to define the student within and against the dominant culture and institutions of education? To what degree do the invisible tensions of visibly marked bodies continue to uphold the belonging of non-belonging faces of “language- identified” integration for newcomer youth (Derrida, 1998, pp. 16-17). What is missing in the curriculum for the student to identify their body-of-cultural-origin in the new language, aside from all the assistive spoken language programming that ultimately reconfirms the alienating verbosity of their physical narration (Freire, 2009, p. 71)?

## The Body: Object of Exchange

My research questions the significant focus placed on language acquisition and proficiency, and the often “superficial oral fluency” connected with it (North York Board of Education, 1988). The objective of my research has been to demonstrate how English language, as an object of exchange, ceases to be yet another “system” to navigate in the dozen odd systems of adaptability and integration facing new-to-Canada students and their families. The paradox is that it is also the key to participation in practically all spheres of Canadian society, i.e. the economic, social, and political systems that run them (Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998, p.23). Thus, I contest that language becomes one of the many systemic applications to both process and possess.

This aspect of ELL engenders what linguistic anthropologists Adi Hastings and Paul Manning (2014) recognize as sociolinguistic identity and the performance of alterity through linguistic practice (pp. 291-295). They claim that language as the expressive voice acts as a way of developing self-identification “in relation to some alter” (p. 292). What the Hastings and Manning perspective offers my field studies, is the “alter” they examine initiates discourse into language alterity *as* the boundary of difference. Their phrase “the voice of the “other” finds its way into the mouth of the “self”<sup>132</sup> resonates with my research (p. 301). It took several readings before I began to understand that, most likely, directed from the perspective of the dominant spoken cultural language, ‘the mouth of the self’ had a derogatory sense. That is to say, I believe what the authors are implying is how the voice of the foreign/nomad/migrant *other* is the phenomenal source that addresses the *beingness* of the self, as speaker.

Scholars writing on language have done extensive research evaluating whether language is something one *does* or whether it is something one *has* or perhaps, what one *is* (Freire, 1970;

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<sup>132</sup> This discussion by Hastings and Manning relates to a larger section on the intricacies of Bakhtin’s (1986) *heteroglossia*.

Derrida, 1996; Braidotti, 1994). Others have more thoroughly investigated the role of language, speech, and voice as acts of identity in which speakers “produce” or “perform” self/selves than I can here (Hall, 1992; Spivak, 1988). Sumara and Davis speak to the intersection of disparate disciplines as “the agents that come together, in contexts of their co-activities” I too seek to engage the visible identifications of newcomer ELL students bodies of colour, race, and gender, in relation to those of their peers who share the same space (2008, p. 34; Carozzi, 2005, p. 28).

### **Globish<sup>133</sup>: Broad Strokes**

Globally speaking, the exponential rise of English-language learning and its coveted conversational proficient “product” continues to ensure the English language’s place as a highly sought after commodity. English is a “must-have” marketable exchange;<sup>134</sup> it is the most widely used language by so many non-native speakers and for many social purposes the world over (Maybin and Mercer, 1996). The global population speaks a variety of different English standards referred to as Global English, World English, Common English, International English, Continental English and General English (Crystal, 2007). On that account, the supply-and-demand of English consumption continues to echo deep-seated perceptions that define hegemonic cultural identities. British colonialism bequeathed many Englishes (as official language) on practically every continent. As the *lingua franca* used in business, trade, and diplomacy, its social capital produces, reproduces, and measures the divide of inequality (Bourdieu, 1986). Private language schools “sell” English and entice learners through promotional packaging with titles like English 101, English for Dummies, and English in 30

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<sup>133</sup> The portmanteau “Globish is not ‘pidgin’ or ‘broken’ English but it is highly simplified and unidiomatic.” See Robert McCrum *The Guardian*, 2006.

<sup>134</sup> Australia’s international television channel ‘Australian Network’ broadcasts a fifteen-part series targeted toward intermediate/advanced English language learners called ‘The Business of English’ ([australianetwork.com](http://australianetwork.com)). The service runs 24/7 to more than 46 countries across Asia, the Pacific, and India. The purpose is to assist in business transactions such as meetings, negotiations, and presentations. The station carries an array of other programming for non-English speakers with catchy names such as ‘English Bites’, ‘Living English’ and ‘Go Lingo’.

days—the selling point, to effectively enable foreign students to speak and function in the new language.

For the most part, are these goals not the same learning outcomes desired by mainstream education. In the thoroughly written Ministry of Education documents that speak to assessment-evaluations, programming, transitioning, adaptation concerns, and the many other carefully outlined considerations in the development of newcomer learners, isn't mainstream ELL striving for the same goals? That is to say, minus the 'language packaging', at the end of the day the students in our institutionally sanctioned spaces of learning want to speak English. Education wants it for them too.

In the proceeding sections of this chapter, I examine the experience of the body *in* the experience of English-language learning (Perry and Medina, 2011). Using frameworks of Lecoq's gestural language in relation to space and spatial patterning, I demonstrate how bodies primarily make meaning through movement and how they do so without words (Ellsworth, 2005; Armstrong and Wilcox, 2007; Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p. 148). In addition, I look at how education as a dominant social paradigm continues to maintain issues of power, authority, and difference in the context of newcomer processes of teaching and learning by providing an overview questioning frameworks that could be invisibly fostering notions of alterity (Hastings and Manning, 2004).

## **Languaging Experience<sup>135</sup>**

Languaging experience, is a term borrowed from scholar Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's (1999) "kinaesthetic consciousness" or the primal ways in which human beings (uniquely) make meaning of the world (p. 148). By simply adding 'ing' to the word 'language' not only

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<sup>135</sup> See Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, *The Primacy of Movement* (1999).

transforms it from a noun it into a verb action, but it also, suitably contextualizes the movement for my vision of a transposed Lecoq/ELL experience. I must point out there is a distinction to be made here between the sensation and consciousness of kinaesthetic meaning making. Sensation is infinite. Our sense organs register approximately 10 million bits of information per second (Davis, Sumara, and Luce-Kapler, 2007, p. 24). In its simplest form, the human organism's capacity for sensorial experiencing far exceeds what consciousness can even begin to accommodate. This is largely due to perception, or rather, the pieces of information needed to help organize and interpret conscious activity (p. 21).

I interpret perception as something that is learned through our subjective, active, experiencing, which is uniquely situated within environmental, social and gendered communities of our lived experiences (Code, 1987; Lang, 2011). According to Merleau-Ponty (1962) in the phenomenal field, the world is “already there,” even before consciousness and our situated experience begins—what we learn to perceive depends largely on where and how we learn to perceive it (p. x; Davis, Sumara, and Luce-Kapler, 2007, p. 32). Language and words contribute greatly to the orientation of perception and in defining consciousness, but do they limit the languaging experience? Are the newcomer students’ experiences shaped in and therefore constrained by English language-learning frameworks in the curriculum? How is experience, yielded largely through a Cartesian approach (built upon reason and fundamentally grammar based), determining the newcomers’ settlement and integration experiences?

Betty Jane Wagner’s (2002) work on the intercultural body-to-language learning through drama performance may be useful here. Wagner asks “[w]hat is language but sound produced on the breath by the complex action of the tongue, palate, larynx, and glottal mechanism to create aural symbols that have meaning in a particular language community” (Wagner, 2002, p. 3).

Aside from the necessary “mechanics” that Wagner articulates in the speaking of a language, my inquiry into newcomers’ *languaging experience* considers the embodied ethos of the dominant language in relation to the students’ cultures of origin. It is a way of addressing what Rae Johnson (2007) calls the “somatic imprints of oppression” embodied through the non-verbal actions of dominant social encounters. Johnson qualifies somatic oppression as the manner in which the marginalized (here, newcomer student) embody social conditions through non-verbal actions (p. 2). Two salient points in Johnson’s work<sup>136</sup> resonate well with *languaging experience*: how our social experience not only determines our embodied experience, but also reflects our experience in the social, to become who we are through our bodies, and not just our minds (p. 3). What happens to newcomer students on a corporeal level in the context of English-language learning is both meaningful and critical to their sense of embodied self (p. 5).

In other words, it is not about the fluency in which the learner can navigate past, present and future tenses, or the ability to memorize irregular verbs. It is not about the phonemes or morphemes or the building up of a vocabulary. These acquisitions, complicated as they may be, are the external, applied dimensions of English-language learning and need to be supplemented with a more body-focused component to learning. My research seeks to expose how the need to learn the dominant language occurs by reconfirming the newcomers’ difference. I question this method of integration as the marker of (un) successful learning for settlement adaptation.

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<sup>136</sup> Note, Rae Johnson’s work is framed within psychotherapeutic and psychoeducational perspectives.

## Cause and Effect of ELL Curricula

In causation<sup>137</sup> lies an intrinsic dimension to perception, to how we formulate our perceptions as we share and use experience. In other words, there is a relationship between an event (the cause) and a second event (the effect), whereby the first is transformed as result of the second.

From a phenomenological perspective, causation is challenged: “There is no speaker, there is a flow of words set in motion independently of any intention to speak” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2006, p. 203). In this instance, speech is a result (effect) of motivation or momentum (cause) derived from sensation or stimuli produced in the body, thus the words of spoken meaning results as a process of rational thought. The way we encounter perceptions of the world, is through the lived-experience.

Anna Marmodoro (2006) has drawn out causal implications for learning in her discussion of Aristotle’s *Physics*. She claims the philosopher expounded that we do not possess knowledge of a thing<sup>138</sup> until the nature of its “why” is grasped (*Phys.* 194 b 17–20). Aristotle speaks of this in the realm of causality, where the ‘thing’ is comprised of an entity, object, event, fact—anything that undergoes a physical, mutual, process of realization. Aristotle maintained, “In general, the producer is the cause of the product and the changer of the thing changing” (Aristotle, Book V, trans. 1998, p. 115). Take for example the acts of building and being built,

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<sup>137</sup> Causality theory dates back to Ancient Greece of Aristotle’s *Physics* (II, 3) and Metaphysics (V, 2) and the search for the question “why” in relation to the knowledge of existence. Using the analogy of the sculptor sculpting a (bronze) statue Aristotle inscribed *Four Causes* that can implicate the answer why to a question. They are: I) an intrinsic feature from which something is produced II) the form and template, which is the account of the what-it-was-to-be-that-thing III) the source of the primary principle of change or stasis (i.e. the father is the cause of the child) IV) Cause as end. The end of something is what the thing is for (e.g., good health is the purpose of eating correctly, exercising and so forth). See Aristotle’s *The Metaphysics* (Book V: Delta) p. 115.

<sup>138</sup> Bill Brown’s *Thing Theory* tracks the nature of ‘things’ that include the ‘thing’s’ people seek to have (as in object possession), to how things become ‘things’ once they’ve lost their purpose and function (“when the drill breaks, when the car stalls”), to things we encounter (ideas and projects): “If thing theory sounds like an oxymoron, then, it may not be because things reside in some balmy elsewhere beyond theory but because they lie both at hand and somewhere outside the theoretical field, beyond a certain limit, as a recognizable yet illegible remainder or as the entifiable that is unspecifiable. Things lie beyond the grid of intelligibility the way mere things lie outside the grid of museal exhibition, outside the order of objects. If this is why things appear in the name of relief from ideas (what’s encountered as opposed to what’s thought), it is also why the Thing becomes the most compelling name for that enigma that can only be encircled and which the object (by its presence) necessarily negates.” See Brown, 2001 pp. 1-22.

each of these function as a separate ‘thing’ (the builder or the house) yet when united, the two aspects interdependently bring about another realization (act of building and the house being built) (Marmodoro, 2007, p. 205). The reciprocity between the builder and the act of building actualizes one (in) to the other, thus the “why” here is the consequence of the one “thing” as it relates to the other, second aspect, of its nature. Aristotle’s theory concluded that the effect of a response is directly related to act of a cause, of which (he ascertained), there were four kinds of causes.<sup>139</sup>

I raise these theoretical discussions of causation because of how they play out in teaching; in other words, teaching is both *the cause* of learning and *the effect* of learning (Marmodoro, 2007, p. 227). Their independent functions assist in the mutuality of their dependence.

This interpretation of causality theory helped me consider how perplexing learning processes designed with the intention of helping students can also *unintentionally* harm them at the same time. Teachers, schools, the curriculum, Boards and the Ministry of Education, are obviously not intentionally seeking to harm students.

In the realm of Aristotelian cause and effect, intention will always contain within it the potential for the *unintentional*. The space between potentiality and actuality is replete with indeterminable possibilities and thus, contradictions arise in the form of advantageous and problematic properties, in implicit relation to the cause and the effect. Teaching and learning occupy a place in this space. Teaching and learning are change and movement; a fluid continuum of opposing binary tensions that ebb and flow, expand and contract, progress and regress, succeed and fail—and so forth.

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<sup>139</sup> Aristotle defined Four Causes: Material cause, Formal cause, Efficient or Moving cause, Final cause. See Aristotle, *Physics*, Book 5, section 1013.

## **Body-English Paradox**

Without a doubt, proposing non-verbal body/neutral mask pedagogy for newcomer English language learning curricula could seem paradoxical. Translating Lecoq's pedagogy of body practices from theatre to compulsory courses in English-language education represents a disciplinary divide. Examining how the body and its movement or silence *vis-à-vis* the mask might appear unrelated to the language-learning objective.

Yet my desire to incorporate Lecoq's work in this study is two-fold. First, at his School, exploring the body in direct experience of learning is integral to the work. Lecoq believed reliance *on* sensory awareness and of movement frame a discovery of self in terms of the individual's grasp of real life situations in relation to material contexts encountered of the external world (Lecoq, 2000, p.19). By insisting on the physical realities of each situation Lecoq's methodology intentionally bypasses the psychological (Bradby, 2006, p. xv). The reasoning was to encourage the student to express and differentiate direct experience of the body and not engage in a projected or replica of an experience of psychological representation of the situation.<sup>140</sup>

Second, Lecoq's method teaches students how to draw from their intuitive "nature of self" (p. xii). His process of examining self through bodies in space hinges on intuitiveness, hence Lecoq strategically integrated intuition as a fundamental element into his teaching. He believed intuition empowers the student actor to discover their language, unique to their way of expressing that language, rather than imposing one upon them (Bradby, 2006, p. xii). Language surrounds us. It is "happening" well before the application of words. Antonio Damasio (1999) contends

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<sup>140</sup> Lecoq shared a similar view on representation as that of Merleau-Ponty. Although his was not to dispute consciousness but more to free the body in theatre before imposing concrete ideas formed in the mind. Whereas Merleau-Ponty strongly argued that the bodily experience precedes, even supersedes representations of 'psychic facts'.

that, as human organisms, we are a body and conscious awareness before we are language (p. 108). True to Lecoq's teachings, this substantiates an embodied perspective that exemplifies the ability to create language emerges from our need to move in order to survive (Murray, 2003, p. 76). Language does not come *out* of nowhere; it evolved as the biology of the human form developed—from evolution to signing, to gestures, to language as an audible form of communication, all configured within a grammar of words (Tecumseh Fitch, 2010; Armstrong and Wilcox, 2007, p. 10).

Linguists have traced pre-verbal language modality of speech as a visual medium where knowledge was acquired through the eyes, hands, at one time, the incarnate prototypes of nouns and verbs (pp. 35-38). The interaction of communication meant just that, inter-*act-ing*, as in, occupying space through motion. There's no disputing the monumental role that visible, embodied gesturing has played in the evolution of language, versus the sophisticated finesse of how language is now largely contained to speech.

My research speaks to the sizeable gap between the cultural and physiological practice of language versus how language acquisition is presently bound to thinking processes. I emphasize strategies that assume mind-language learning connections, in which the body becomes representational, a secondary source, and words the external sign of a corporeally motivated process of thought (Perry and Medina, 2011; Perry 2010; Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 205). By representational, I mean movement of the body is considered a complementary tool in the way of a "signifying object," one that assist in the strengthening of thinking skills (Davidson, 2004; Osmond, 2007).

Merleau-Ponty (1962) argued, "movement must somehow cease to be a way of designating things or thoughts, and become the policy and procedure presence of that thought [...] and

moreover, not its clothing but its token or its body” (p. 182).<sup>141</sup> This merits a brief overview into why language and thinking give the deceptive impression of existing as a singular function—and how this approach to teaching language and linguistic practice, has deeper implications to the foreign student.

### **Vygotsky’s Thought and Language**

Close to a century ago, Lev Vygotsky (1934/1986) sought to examine the interrelation between thought-to-language developments and to debunk the myth of their inseparableness along the way. The results of his research produced a book appropriately titled *Thought and Language*. It would go on to become a major work in the fields of linguistic theory, psychological phenomenon and learning disabilities. Examining phylogenetic (evolutionary history of a specific organism) and ontogenetic (origination and development of an organism) evolution, Vygotsky argued that there was no specific interdependence between either’s foundation. Vygotsky’s experiments concluded that the integrated relationship between thinking and speaking was really a “product of the historical development of human consciousness” and not a prerequisite for it (p. 210). In other words, the connection was ‘made’ in the sense of caused by human beings versus evolving as a natural occurrence. I draw on this aspect of Vygotsky’s research as a way to think about my research in relation to present English language learning frameworks of mainstream education.

The desire to assign a causal relation between brain function and language development is not surprising, yet it perpetuates and naturalizes the very duality that I am questioning. Speech is certainly a more “energy efficient” and functional form of interlocution than non-verbal forms of

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<sup>141</sup> Jaffe-Berg’s multilingual performance analogy of language studies a similar theory that equates speech to an embodied costume. See Jaffe-Berg, 2009.

communication (Armstrong and Wilcox, 2007, p. 38). Along with phonology, semantics and rationale, verbal language allows for concept formations found in the building of “sentence-like thought units” also known as propositions (p. 8). Human languages share propositional meaning as a way to enable a common referent – “a link between ‘the world’ and a truth value” (Tecumseh Fitch, 2010, p. 120). Propositions<sup>142</sup> secure an incredibly complex part of the language process in that they allow for modal and auxiliary verbs conjectures (might or could have) grounding the ‘real one’ or truth in existent proposition; possibility within actuality (p. 120). Mark Johnson refers to propositions as paradigmatic patterns of experience that substantiate adequate internal structuring to permit inferences (1987, pp. 3-4). However, do propositions, a component of language structure, contain the realm of the experiencing body within the scope with which language can express it? Does this not typify Lecoq’s notion that “the body knows things about which the mind is ignorant”, or the similar sentiment of Polanyi’s (1969) extensive research into tacit knowledge that “we know more than we can tell”<sup>143</sup> (Lecoq 2000, p. 9; Polanyi, p. 4).

### **Language Sensed but not yet Acknowledged**

Art scholars contend that the aesthetics of music, dance, and paintings are also language-centered, in the sense that they also convey meaning (Langer, 1974, Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, Kentridge, 2013). The fact that these alternative language forms “lack a propositional truth value” (and actually encourage subjective interpretation), often reduce them to representational

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<sup>142</sup> “Propositions are the abstract objects thought to provide the middle term in a link between “the world” and a truth value [...] [S]emanticists therefore think of propositions as functions that map *possible* worlds onto truth values: the sentence *It is raining outside* maps all the worlds in which rains falls outside the dwelling of the speaker/writer to “TRUE” and all the other worlds to “FALSE.” Propositions must encompass possible worlds (in addition to the actual world) for the simple reason that we often want to talk about what “might” happen, or what “could have” happened, and thus discuss some possible world than the real one that exists. And if that sounds complicated, it is because meaning *is* complicated.” See Tecumseh Fitch 2010, p. 120.

<sup>143</sup> “Tacit knowledge refers to the kind of things revealed not so much in our ability to articulate them as in the action or actions we take.” See Pinnegar and Hamilton, 2009, p. 17.

and/or symbolic meanings—helpers that creatively contribute to language-thinking-meaning model of communication (Tecumseh Fitch, 2010, p. 121; Johnson, 2007, p. 207).

The question of meaning making of/for knowledge and how human beings possess, develop, and arrive at knowing has long been contested—many disciplines have turned to historical western scholars, such as Plato and Aristotle, as a way of thinking about what knowing might be. Historian, Francis MacDonald Comford (1945) would insist that what defined Aristotle the pupil, from Plato, his master is how each conceived of the world.<sup>144</sup> In Ancient Greece, Aristotle declared “By nature, all men long to know” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. 1998, p. 4). Karen Krasny (2004), writing on imagery, affect, and the embodied mind, points out that, while Plato declared that the world takes its shape in ideas, Aristotle held that they lie within the experience of the immediate physical world (p. 42). Aristotle contrasted meaning and knowledge between two fundamentally opposing forms of cognition—direct experiences that derive from propositions and experience, which he deemed “go beyond the content of any thought” (Aristotle, 1998, p. 3). He attributed the capacity for the latter form of knowledge, to concrete experience through the five senses of man, and not subject or dependent on concepts or ideas:

This is because experience is the knowledge of particulars and skill that of universals, and practical actions, like all occurrences, are concerned with particulars...If, then, one were to have a theoretical account without experience, knowing the universal but being ignorant of the immediate particular, he will often err in his treatment [...] For it is the particular that must be treated. (Lawsen-Tancred, 1998, p. 5)

Lecoq’s NM offers me a way to correlate body meaning to the performance of English language learning, particularly in response to the larger Cartesian body-to-language assumptions. This

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<sup>144</sup> In Plato’s *The Republic* the question arises “What is this education to be, then?” Of which Plato replies “We shall begin with the mind, before we start physical training...Under that head will come stories; and of these there are two kinds: some are true, others fictitious.” See Comford, 1945, p. 68.

takes the form of a *mimetic-doing* language experience typically superseded by *knowing* structures associated with grammar acquisition and speech proficiency. Another way of looking at it, the body is *le moteur* (the motor) of connected physical engagement, which is ‘sensed but no longer seen’ in language (Buckely, 2009, p. 251).

My strategy is to explore language through physical activity by encouraging *non-language* corporeal based expression that arises, but falls outside ‘meaning’ in a traditional *sense* of propositional meaning. Essentially this challenges what prominent linguists have termed a ‘thinking-for-speaking’ approach to language learning where speech shapes perception and reality (Whorf, 1956; Slobin, 1987; Vygotsky, 1987). While there is efficiency in this model of language learning, such as assisting in the organization of complex language structuring well outside the sphere of my research, for the new language learner “thinking-for-speaking” is too restrictive; worse, it can be where the inconspicuous embodiment of oppression begins or is sustained (Johnson, 2007).<sup>145</sup> This merits a look at the present language learning structures in place. How is education conflating English acquisition and proficiency with settlement and integration? And, in this conflation, how is it preventing the very kind of learning that I am trying to achieve.

## **The Settlement Investment**

In the 15 years, since SEPT workers first stepped into Toronto schools, statistics, program continuity, and its annual green light funding demonstrates the ongoing success of the partnership. As one of the primary funder for the SWIS programs, the federal governments’

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<sup>145</sup> The on-line OED defines oppression as: 1) “an uncomfortable or distressing sense of (physical or mental) constriction; affliction; depression or heaviness. 2) Prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or exercise of authority, control, or power; tyranny; exploitation. Also: an act or instance of this. Retrieved from OED.com on October 28, 2013

financial investment in the project greatly influences the program's direction and focus. That is to say, as a 'creative initiative' for newcomers (on behalf of the CIC) it is a means to both help strengthen social integration and encourage active participation, while instilling a sense of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (Government of Canada, CIC, 2012). The sooner students and their families can begin to feel at ease, the sooner they will adjust and begin to progress, both scholastically and in the community (Edwards, 1998). The Government of Canada website outlines this in a 2012 report on the *Evaluation of the Strategic Plan for Settlement and Language Training under the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement* (COIA):

As the lead federal government department in matters of immigration, CIC's mandate is based on the principles of shared jurisdiction of Section 95 of the Constitution Act, 1867, the Citizenship Act, and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. The mission of the department includes the integration of immigrants into Canada in a way that maximizes their contribution to the country. Aligned with this mission is the department's Strategic Objective to ensure successful integration of newcomers to Canada. CIC's strategy to ensure the achievement of this outcome is to collaborate with key partners to deliver the highest-quality programs that are efficient and responsive to community needs.

The Immigrant Social Adaptation Program (ISAP), Host Programs and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada Program (LINC) were the settlement initiatives delivered by CIC at the time of the Strategic Plan inception. In 2008, the set of settlement programs delivered by CIC merged into one program, known as the Modernized Approach, which consisted of five expected outcomes:

- A. *Information/Orientation*—Newcomers make informed decisions about their settlement and understand life in Canada;

- B. *Language/Skills*—Newcomers have language/skills needed to function in Canada;
- C. *Labour Market Access*—Newcomers obtain the required assistance to find employment commensurate with their skills and education;
- D. *Welcoming Communities*—Newcomers receive help to establish social and professional networks so they are engaged and feel welcomed in their communities;
- E. *Policy and Program Development*—To ensure effective delivery and achieve comparable settlement outcomes across Canada (Government of Canada, 2012, original italics)

Considering how the economic status of newcomers to Canada has seen a significant downward shift in the last 20 years,<sup>146</sup> there is valid reason for concern behind the Canadian governments' fiscal concerns and labour market purview of integration (Omidvar and Richmond, 2003, p. 2). In an effort to reduce social assistance dependency, it is essential that newcomer families not only have access and opportunities to earn, provide, and contribute to Canadian society, but also to also feel supported in the process. Hence, the CIC's underlying motive is to help stimulate possibilities and increase capacity for its future citizens. The SWIS programs are one of many developed by the CIC as they recognize that in the immediacy of settlement, connecting families with community programs helps establish the basic life essentials that, in the long run, will assist individuals in becoming active, engaged and productive citizens (Government of Canada, 2013).

This broad overview of the federal government's financial investment in settlement programming speaks to what motivates the practicalities behind these systems, and the course of actions that influence, and often dictate, their function and/or purpose. For example, the SWIS program is a system of settlement, contained within another system of education. My concerns lie in how the programs relate to one another—aside from the obvious responsibilities of

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<sup>146</sup> “The groups of immigrants and refugees who have arrived in the last 20 years—overwhelmingly non-European visible minorities are experiencing severe difficulties in the Canadian labour market”. See Omidvar Richmond, 2003.

administering short-term program information that assist with transitional issues faced by newcomers'.<sup>147</sup> So let us consider how education as a system intersects with settlement services.

Almost 20 years ago, sociology scholars Paul Anisef and Mary Bunch (1994) conducted research demonstrating how visible minority youth (VMY) encountered significant challenges in the school system. Some of their main findings identified administrative and authoritative issues such as school policies, discriminatory attitudes, and organizational structuring of schools where achievement or success among minority youth was not being equitably addressed (Anisef and Bunch, 1994, pp. 8-10). At the same time, the educational system was receiving a tremendous amount of pressure to respond to the needs of growing diversity amongst its students, and more importantly, to make them work. The intersection of these two pressures necessitated an intervention that initiated the CIC/settlement/education collaboration. Why? Schools and schooling are critical sites that help define and determine the socialization of newcomer students (George and Shera, 1999/2000). A significant “point of entry” into the new culture, school can also be the introduction to the unsettling, unequal “newcomering” space “*between cultures*” (Knowles, 2009, original italics). Some new-to-Canada youths may have never experienced an/other culture outside the homogeneity of their home country. This is quite a sharp contrast to Canada’s socially dynamic classrooms, reflective of the larger ethnically stratified communities in densely populated urban areas of the country where most newcomers typically settle.

First and foremost, the purpose of the school system is structured to serve in the education of students. Schooling and educating are often seen as interchangeable (Cooks and Warren, 2011, p. 211). Educational pioneer John Dewey (1938) argued that the primary purpose of education and schooling was not so much to *prepare* students to live a useful life, but to teach them how to

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<sup>147</sup> Citizenship Immigration Canada has divided these into categories of: information and orientation; language training and skills development; labour market access; and welcoming communities. Retrieved from the Government of Canada website July 24, 2013

live pragmatically. In the over half century since Dewey's time, vast changes have occurred with regards to education and schooling, largely due to the culture diversity of our student population. It is only fitting that critical pedagogy theorists, Peter McLaren, Paolo Freire, and Henry Giroux to name but a prominent few, analyze *how* education is "schooling" these students today. In *A Critical Interview with Henry Giroux* (Global Education Magazine, 2014) the well-known American scholar, cultural critic, and founding theorist of critical pedagogy, argues that "pedagogy is always political because it is connected to acquisition of agency [...] the relationships among knowledge, authority and power. It draws attention to questions concerning who has control over the conditions for the production of knowledge, values, and skills, and it illuminates how knowledge, identities, and authority are constructed within particular sets of social relations" (Global Education Magazine, n.d., para. 2). In a similar vein, Cooks and Warren, and McLaren contest that schools are institutionally sanctioned sites in which to educate social knowledge, behaviour and "reproduction of the dominant status quo culture" (Cooks and Warren, 2011; McLaren, 1998, p. 167). Perry and Medina (2011), Cooks and Warren (2011), Carozzi (2005), and Sinclair (2005) are voices in a growing community of contemporary scholars writing on education's schooling of bodies. Socialization, they claim, *schools* bodies as is demonstrated through the recognizable positioning of roles found in schools: student, teacher, custodial caretaker, principal, administration and so forth. These roles are further defined by the acceptance and rejection of embodied performances, i.e. dis/abled bodies, gendered bodies, raced bodies (Cooks and Warren, 2011, p. 212). What about the displaced bodies of newcomer youth comprised within these roles? How does the visibility of settlement services presence in our school system not only immediately identify the newcomer student body, but further exacerbate the schooling of their social positioning too?

Despite the tremendous welcoming benefits of adaptation and integration issues provided for newcomers, I can't help but wonder if the areas of immigration focus, funded by the CIC's settlement, resettlement, adaptation and integration initiatives, actually contribute to some of the prevailing and enduring issues in education. Is it inconceivable to suggest that the combined efforts of the intersected immigration partnership, further entrench the concept of the "newcomer?"

Here an argument could be made that English language-learning classes and settlement services are a response to a social need (George and Shera, 1999/2000). The plasticity of schooling and its ability to make available what is lacking and/or insufficiently represented, can be seen throughout the developments of Canada's education history.<sup>148</sup> I would venture to add that as much as this is perhaps one of schooling and education's most admirable features, it is one that comes with its fair share of bumps and bruises. R.S. Peters (2010) wrote on the malleability of the education system as seen from various perspectives: the politicians' exploitation of the social classes, the economists' commoditization of community, and the sociologists' role to ensure socialization in/of/for the classes, in the community (p. 87). This is applicable in settlement too. Service programming provisions and directives are for the most part, if not completely, influenced by perspectives of their agency, be they legal, social, housing, health, language and more. Kareem D. Sadiq (2004) identifies this as the two-tiered, supply-and-demand, of newcomer settlement servicing in Ontario and the City of Toronto, where:

The demand for settlement services is determined by a variety of factors, namely agency location, newcomer residential location, English-or-French-language ability, education,

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<sup>148</sup> Such as the introduction of physical educations in the 1890's, at the time educational reformers felt students caught in the urbanization of the industrial age were subjected to a more sedentary lifestyle, hence, the start to gym. Others include kindergarten (1841), the 'domestic sciences' for girls now known as home-economics (1904), and technical trade work (shop class) for boys (1910). Paul Axelrod in *The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada 1800-1914*, (1997) pp. 104-122.

income, access to transportation, knowledge of city and availability of culturally sensitive services. (Simich, 2004)

The CIC describes its focus on newcomer settlement integration programming as a “two way street approach” (Government of Canada, 2013). I cannot help but wonder about the use of this idiomatic metaphor and its inferred level of reciprocity. I do not base this on the choice of “government-speak” language, but rather, on what it implies in terms of the performance of the “two-way street” practice. Another way of looking at it would be the level of cooperative interchange confined to a *one-way* practical framework that organizes and structures settlement programming. As the school system branches out and interconnects with other systems (such as SWIS), do their contributions fare equally in the alliance of their merger?

Without a doubt, there are many philosophical debatable discussions here concerning systemic policy, immigration, and education, respectively—not to mention the myriad of pragmatic, empirical, issues that arise and expand from them. I recognize that it may appear as though I vacillate between topics of settlement servicing and settlement services *in the school* as though they were the same. However, the development of government mandated settlement programs are to assist in the removal of cultural barriers, minimize socio-economic disparity, and to encourage diversity (Government of Canada, 2013). Settlement workers in schools provide newcomer youth a wide range of information, interpretation, translation, and mediation, including counselling referrals. They are also the intermediaries for the parents of these students as they assist in connecting them with workshops on a range of settlement related topics such as housing, employment, education, health care, and community resources. Essentially, SWIS programming resembles a mini version of a settlement agency—relocated in the school system.

Clearly, there is only so much organization and procedure a system can harmoniously sustain before it begins to bump up against nebulous, ambiguous edges of its intended design. Programs and systems have a purpose and a function. What is worth considering in the case of Citizenship Immigration Canada, settlement services, and education union, is the negotiation of each system's foremost function as they *settle in* with one another. I do not believe this is a SWIS problem, nor do I feel it is an education problem. I argue it is a result of their combination. What ensues is a symptomatic grey area, a consequence of the hybridity, as each system's objective reaches its limits. I refer to these as the *unsettling* aspects of settlement. In the following sections, I explore a few areas to illustrate some internal and external social conflicts that arise when theories of settlement services become practice.

### **Lumping, Labeling and the Naming of the Un-Named**

In 2001, principal researchers Kenise Murphy Kilbride (Ryerson University) and Paul Anisef (York University) conducted a study commissioned by the Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS) titled: *To Build on Hope: Overcoming the Challenges Facing Newcomer Youth at Risk in Ontario*. The *Hope* project followed the stories of five immigrant youth aged 16-29 residing in Ontario. Each was identified as being ‘at risk’ of not succeeding in their settlement integration (p.i). Kilbride and Anisef defined ‘at risk’ as the challenges that newcomer youth face due to factors such as disadvantaged socio-economic positioning, visible minority, and English language competency barriers (p. ii). The researchers emphasize the relativity of the term, “at risk,” and how it may shape contributing causes to the innumerable social, political, environmental, and personal factors that can influence the subjectivity of one’s settlement and integration. An invaluable resource of information, I felt the

study demonstrated the excessive burden placed on the school system to provide students with equitable opportunities, even when their social, economic, and educational circumstances were anything but equitable.

An unexpected twist in this study found that many of the “at-risk” identified youth did not relate to, or with, the term “at risk”. Despite how they represented the non-Canadian socioeconomic demographic in respect to some form of government subsidy or financial assistance (a comparative survey in relation to their mainstream classroom ‘Canadian’ peers), these youths did not think of themselves as being particularly at risk. As Kilbride and Anisef (2001) point out:

Quite the contrary: though frustrated by social exclusionary forces encountered in schools and workplace, they believe they will eventually overcome these problems and realize their goals. (p.ii)

The study made me consider how *unsettling* the administrative assessment and naming of newcomers is, a necessary process that helps align provisions to assist in their settlement. The teachers of my In-Class study shared with me that settlement discrepancies were not limited to levels of English-language acquisition for the student participants. Almost half the students had landed immigrant status and the other half were refugee claimants. This type of rapport with the teachers is worth noting; in our pre/post class discussions, my field study teachers wanted to explain their students to me. They often contextualized a student’s outburst or resistance to partake in an activity with a learning evaluation in the way of needs assessment and so forth. Appreciative of their contributions, I kindly communicated that this perspective, which was largely interpreted and acted out given their history and relationship with the student, was not necessary to the outcome of the study. I did not want to see the students according to their

demographic, or their represented identification. I wanted to work with body not yet proficient in the dominant learning language.

Nevertheless, I noticed similar language used in the many ways in which newcomer youth were presented in most of the specialized research topics I've come across that discuss integration/adaptation programming, policy initiatives, social marginalization, and acculturative challenges (Seat, 2000; Winnemore, 2005; Omidvar and Richmond, 2003; Lim, Lo, Siemiatycki, Doucet, 2005). That is to say, the discrepancies between the ways in which newcomer youth are identified, referred to, and/or, named within the (CIC/settlement/education) systems continue to be different in comparison to how they perceive themselves. In one particular study that speaks to the inclusive exclusion of race and representation in education, authors Graham and Slee (2006) call this the lumping, labeling. They claim that dominant culture power struggles occur:

When we identify categories of children, whether we refer to children at risk or children with a disability or children whose first language is not English, we not only make difference visible but work to maintain power imbalances and structural inequity by reifying unnamed attributes that carry social, political, and cultural currency.

(pp. 92-93)

Thus identifying (labeling) the *other* in relation to the dominant group induces a “un-naming” (lumping) which defines the dominant groups of the mainstream (p. 92). Un-naming becomes the privileged binary opposition to labeling and lumping, where the “what” of the naming versus what is *unnamed* reflect tensions of power (p.9, italics added). The “naming” of class, race, culture, and gender works to contain or delimit the struggle that continues to challenge those tensions of cultural domination (hooks, 1994; Friere, 1970/2009).

Canada recognizes the country-of-origin through the culturally hyphenated identifications of its citizens: Somali-Canadian, Ital-Canadian, Chinese-Canadian, and more (Chaudhuri, 1999). In our schools, settlement service assistance, English language learning class, and the visibility of racialized bodies are obvious markers that identify the newcomer. Do they also in/advertently continue to define newcomer students as different from other students in ‘mainstream’ classrooms—even when those students join them there?

### **On *Becoming* the Newcomer**

Marie LaCroix’s (2004) research on the “social construction” of the refugee claimant<sup>149</sup> addresses the complexities of leaving and/or fleeing ones country of birth only to confront a new societal designation upon arrival in the host country (p. 147). She argues how on in *becoming* “the refugee,” one’s subjectivity is irrevocably altered (Lacroix, 2004, p. 149). LaCroix creates a theoretical framework that explores the formation of alterity in the immigration process, outlining the boundaries between self-identity and alterity. She claims self-identification has a relationship with one’s past, history and cultural heritage. In highlighting the *refugeeness* of the new, social identification, LaCroix demonstrates how the dislocation *from* these relations, subsequently influences “who they were, who they are, and who they will become” (p. 147).

Although the claimant/convention refugee focus of LaCroix’s study is on a complicated and difficult process of immigration, her cogent criticisms on altered identity and the *expected* “shift” from culture-of-origin to that of the mainstream is particularly salient and certainly applicable to all people migrating to Canada (Seat, 2000, p.1).

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<sup>149</sup> Claimant and convention refugees’: “A senior immigration officer first decides whether a person is eligible to have a claim determined by the Refugee Division of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). A Convention refugee is a person who is outside of their country of nationality or habitual residence and who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, political opinion, nationality or membership in a particular social group.” (CIC website, ‘Eligibility’, 2012)

The ‘newcomer’ moniker, similar to and shared by, that of the refugee, occurs in relation to some alter (Hastings and Manning, 2004, pg. 292). A somewhat alternative perspective from LaCroix, I explore the *embodied* process of “identity formation” in the becoming of the newcomer student. This is a correlation between the country-of-origin *beingness* as it embodies and negotiates cultural identity in the new society (Cummins, 1997).

In a CIC/OASIS<sup>150</sup> (2000) funded study for the *Family Service Association of Toronto* (FSA), Rajko Seat speaks to identity formation of newcomer youth in their settlement, integration and adaptation process as painful and stressful. He states:

Because these youths may go through an experience of considering themselves to be a part of mainstream culture, but realizing that others see them as another culture, and they may struggle with the mismatch between their self-identification and their perceived identification by others. (Seat, 2000, p. 3)

The 1990s produced no shortage of scholarly works discussing the pervasive ways in which education influences the integration of identities into the social (Giroux, 1993; McLaren. 1998; Fuss, 1989; hooks, 1994). How do processes of the lumping, labeling, naming and *unnaming* influence newcomer youths *becoming* hegemonic representations of their cultural identifications? The departure and relocation to Canada focus of the LaCroix study is clearly the initial, defining, dislocation in the becoming of something *other* than. Within the parameters of school and schooling, cultural diversity descriptors such as, ethnicity, diaspora, and racial, identify the boundaries of difference in the larger (sociocultural) context. The *becoming* of the newcomer modifies how the newcomer becomes aware of his/her own ethnicity (Phinney, 2003, p. 63).

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<sup>150</sup> The Ontario Administration of Settlement and Integration Services (OASIS)

## **SWIS Integration and Adaptation Settlement Strategies**

Social and settlement workers, Jennifer Clarke and Eileen Lan (2011), co-wrote a paper addressing issues on the current status of settlement work in Ontario secondary schools. Motivated by what they believe to be oppressive measures in the settlement and integration of newcomer to Canada youth, the authors claim the continuance of procedures still in use resemble a “top-down, charity approach” rooted in colonialism and racism (Introduction section, para. 2). Fifteen years after the SWIS program’s implementation, I find Clarke and Wan’s views on the state of today’s education/settlement partnership refreshingly frank. They explicitly address practical areas they claim are no longer working and ‘in need’ of critical systemic and structural change (Structural change section, para. 2). Clarke and Wan demonstrate how, by virtue of recognizing the newcomer youth as a service user in need of settlement programming in the school system, the system already disadvantages them as “cultural and/or dissimilar other[s]” (Sakamoto, 2007, p. 528).

Although we promoted the discourse of integration, our everyday work was grounded in the discourse of assimilation: we helped newcomer youth adopt the values of the dominant society, with little or no regard for their own cultures and ideas. Rather than engaging authentically with newcomer youth to help them identify their needs and the services required to meet those needs, we were complicit in reproducing the oppression that they experienced in school and Canadian society. In other words, we participated in their assimilation under the guise of integration. (Clarke and Wan, Immigrant and Acculturation section, para. 1)

SWIS is now a recognized and valuable support in helping families’ navigate settlement processes necessary for integration into Canadian society. Since its beginnings, the

settlement/education partnership has proven itself as a provider of great opportunities in the enhancement of newcomers' understanding fundamental aspects of settling in Canada. In a larger social context, a supplemental program in alliance with education, it has allowed newcomer families access to community services, as so, to address the immediate needs and major challenges they face, particularly when coming from a cultural background that is significantly different from this one. However, having SWIS present in our schools, doesn't conceal, or for that matter—solve—the *other* factors that actualized it into being. Nor, according to Clarke and Wan, are present methods continuing to be effective, but rather they are *ineffectively* contributing to new issues of acculturation that continue to uphold hegemonic power structures and the socio-economic implications that go with it (Nyers, 2006, p. xvii). Understandably the SWIS program has encountered its own share of 'loopholes' over the two decades since it first began. These include, gaps in services, user fees, and in some instances, long wait times to access services (Clarke and Wan, 2011). Culturally diverse needs of visible minority youth<sup>151</sup> (VMY), concerns which helped instigate the SWIS program decades ago, are no longer the standard of measurement that defines diversity in the current school system (Anisef and Bunch, 1994). Diversity is no longer an anomaly but rather the norm as today classrooms are comprised of non-VMY students from South/Central America, Hungary, Poland, Russian, the Czech Republic, the Balkans, and the Middle East. For these students, their primary language could be a dialect variation of any one of their national languages, yet their visibility is not a distinct nor the defining feature of their "minority" status.

In the spring of 2013, CBC News reported that almost one in five people living in Canada is a visible minority (online source CBC News). The 2011 Statistics Canada census report shows

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<sup>151</sup> The Employment Equity Act defines visible minority as "persons other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/100309/dq100309a-eng.htm>

that in a survey of almost three million people, Canada is home to 6.8 foreign-born residents, or 20.6 per cent of the population, compared to the 19.8 per cent in 2006; it is the highest in the G8<sup>152</sup> group of rich countries. The report projects that between now and 2031, the population of foreign-born migrants could reach between 9.8 million and 12.5 million (CBC, 2013). These statistics led me to question: will the dual newcomer youth integration methods, of language integration and settlement servicing in place, be sufficient. My concern is whether the established success of the CIC/settlement organization/education merger is a system set up to help address and manage newcomers needs—and more importantly, from whose perspective?

Student-body diversity in multiple religions, cultures, languages enrich the system, but it can also be a source of great conflict. The Kilbride/Anisef, Graham/Slee, and LaCroix studies conducted over the last decade illustrate how servicing newcomer needs both assist the student, yet risks marginalizing them as well. However, the Clarke/Wan study points out how present settlement services come *at the risk* of ignoring or excluding other aspects in the life of the newcomer youth (Clarke and Wan, Concluding Thoughts section, para. 1). Similarly, the “loopholes” of the project leader overseeing the job-search program mentioned in my personal experience narrative at the top of this section, followed by my own encounters with the NYC program, demonstrate how difficult situations arise beyond the theories and allotted parameters configured by settlement programming. These acculturative issues surface as result of *living* the experience of cultural transition. In respect to the practical *living* experiences of settlement, my concern focuses what is being offered in the context of the dual integration methods (van Manen, 2007, p. 13; Centre for Applied Social Research, 1999/2000). How can the school system better best practices in place to meet the needs and challenges of newcomer youth today?

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<sup>152</sup> G8 is a group of eight countries that make up the largest global economies. In alphabetical order, they include Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia the UK and the US.

## Bettering Best Practices

Ontario secondary schools accommodate a student body that, among them, share more than 100 different languages. Within this demography are new learners who may or may not have had access to formal education in their homeland or in humanitarian aid camps during potential displacement (Ministry of Education, 2007, p.5). My research targets newcomer youth assessed and placed at the English Learning Development (ELD) or Literacy Enrichment Academic Program (LEAP) levels (i.e. pre- ESL A/B class). Due to the increase of linguistic and cultural diversity in our classrooms, settlement complexities that accompany the needs of these students should come as no surprise. For those who arrive from countries where education was not an option, the learning curve can be especially substantial. The objective of outlining settlement practices in this chapter was to shed light on the intricacies that newcomer youth face.

Theories of acculturation that analyze how individuals adjust to social and cultural norms, have long been a great source of study in the fields of sociology, anthropology and psychology—a much larger discussion beyond the scope of my intended research (Bourdieu, 1993; Kramer, 2003; Berry, 2001). However, I would like to point out how the education/settlement services partnership turned out to be a good, practical, solution that helped mobilize immigration beyond philosophic discussion. Due to the shared investment in ELL students' adaptation and integration, the classroom teacher and settlement worker collaborate in several aspects of newcomer youth related activities. On the one hand, 'settlement' practices as dictated by programs in place largely accommodate immigration related services to ensure education's commitment to the teaching and learning of newcomer students, whereas settlement services assist newcomer youth in their cultural transitions to enable equitable schooling opportunities in their growth and place as Canadian citizens (The Ontario Curriculum, 2007, p. 4).

Given the culturally diverse landscape of today's classrooms, my research calls attention to the traditional parameters of the SWIS program. Drawing from Clarke and Wan's (2011) anti-oppressive framework, these are discourses of "deficit and pathology" that continue to shape settlement work (Immigrant Clients-Service Users section, para. 1). With the now well-established SWIS merger, however, are issues in newcomer youth settlement being sufficiently addressed? Alternatively, is the operational effectiveness of the dual integration relationship, first launched in 1999, now sustaining frameworks that, in fact, orient and organize newcomer alterity and difference (McLaren, 1998; James, 2003; Clarke and Wan, 2004; Hastings and Manning, 2004; Sakamoto, 2007)? As in the hidden curriculum of education, I am curious about the parallels with the "hidden" aspects of settlement. I do not believe these are necessarily concealed or deceptive in nature, but dwell more in a narrow, inconspicuous gap between the administration of programming, language learning, and preconceived expectations of how they serve and act as models for integration. In a review of factors affecting adolescent settlement adaptation processes, Rajko Seat calls this the "expected shift" in cultural orientation as newcomer immigrant youth settle, adapt and integrate into their new Canadian living environment (2000, p. 1).

This is not a criticism of either education's English language-learning focus, or the presence of SWIS in our schools, but more an invocation to expand youth programming beyond the bounds presently available. Of the two, I believe settlement servicing, as a program coming from outside education's mandate, has the space to grow and develop new directions to address newcomer student diversity and transitioning into the Canadian mainstream—albeit *inside* education. Given the success of this confirmed merger, I call upon each system in the partnership to build and invest further in adolescent programming. It is time that settlement systems in place

address some of the *unsettling* aspects of settlement that arise in direct relation to how education and settlement integrate newcomer. In terms of settlement practices for the twenty-first century, both training and curricula of the dominant language urgently need to be critically examined if social practices are meant to integrate rather than assimilate newcomer youth in Canadian society.

As the wider landscape of English-language learning in Canadian schools for newcomer youth makes clear, there are revisions that need addressing and new structuring that needs implementing. My own research represents one of these interventions. My objective in conducting the two field studies was to enable the newcomer student to identify the body-of-cultural-origin in the new language and not feel the need to modify movement and the physical sense of who they are under the dominant language structure (Lacroix, 2004, 156). The design of my In-class field research was to help diminish a “start-over” mentality so they may lose themselves to “fit in” (Lacroix, 2004, 156). Nevertheless, the study pointed out how difficult it is to bring the body-of-cultural origin into the ELL classroom. In the next chapter, I consider how to address this lack more specifically through the body-supplemental.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusions

The body gives rise to language, and that language carries bodily aims, and performs bodily deeds that are not always understood by those who use language to accomplish certain conscious aims. (Felman, 2002)

As seen in the two previous chapters, the field studies provided a means for me to conceptualize how an alternative, embodied component to English language education might help (or hinder) newcomer student integration into mainstream classrooms. In this final chapter, I explore the critical gaps between what I envisioned for my two field locations and what actually transpired. I believe these gaps have the potential to inform and shape future discussions in the field of English language learning, and to expand existing knowledge of newcomer students' settlement integration in relationship with teaching practices. As I begin to address practical im/possibilities of integrating an alternative embodied application into an ELL classroom, I move away from the Sartori study and direct my focus more toward the In-class study whose structure, as previously mentioned, and location clearly lends itself to the intended framework.

### Limitations of the Study

The intention of the ELL study was not to argue against the necessity of becoming an English speaker. Nor was it to challenge English-language learning, English as a Second Language (ESL) learning, English Learning Development (ELD), or Literacy Enrichment Academic Programs (LEAP) in our schools to the point of displacing them. Rather, my study questioned English-language acquisition and proficiency instruction as method of integrating newcomer to Canada youth into the mainstream. Given the transdisciplinarity of the study, the

thesis is limited insofar as the degree with which emergent contextual frameworks need to be established to revision how newcomer youth are received and provided for in education.

Despite the longevity of *École Lecoq*, which opened its doors in 1956, only few thousand or so alumni around the globe have completed the rigorous full two-year professional program to date. It is not an easy training, for it is more difficult to be *dans le disponible* for extended periods than it may seem—precisely because Lecoq’s methods go against the grain of the dominant “thinking” construct. Of the student, it requires the ability to be in the *je ne sais pas* (I don’t know), *on va voir* (we will see), *peut-être* (perhaps) spaces of learning—to practically forget what and how learning took place prior to his pedagogy. Similar to the learning of a new language, thinking a foreign language in your language of origin it makes the process that much more difficult to acquire. In my experience, I have also been guilty of literally translating words in a grammar structures that do not always apply or coincide. As Lecoq’s school is based in France, the experience of living away from home and the comforts, familiarities and sense of order in the out-of-context realities all contribute to the displaced (in the body) learning experience. Students do learn the “language of Lecoq” at his school, yet it is not a learnable language outside the parameters and knowledge of the “self.” His is a process into the self as illustrated by the embodied reality of the physical instrument<sup>153</sup> that is *le corps* (the body). Transposing the dimensions that accompany the actual Lecoq School experience proved difficult.

Nonetheless, my research has shaped a foundation from which I now seek to propose a supplemental to grammar-based language learning, one that covertly seeks to eradicate

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<sup>153</sup> At the Lecoq School, the body is the (actor’s) instrument. Outside this contextualized frame, as in a sociological or psychoanalytic sense, the word ‘instrument’ could be pejoratively misappropriated to interpret the body as an external object, or a subordinate resource for the cognitively dominant instrument of the mind. My study reconsiders this commonly held view of the body-self. In the realm of Lecoq’s theatre, the body as instrument is the prevailing source from which to draw life experiences (albeit for the stage) similar to how a flutist evokes music from the wind instrument, an artist from a brush.

othering<sup>154</sup> and otherness through Lecoq's applied theatre practice and thereby overtly focus on developing an awareness of self in language learning.

First, the physical configuration of the ELL classroom of my In-class study was perhaps the most fundamental challenge encountered. By virtue of sharing the same walls with other learning spaces in the larger context of the school, education paradigms such as the role of the teacher, the agency of the student, curriculum learning expectations and framework prevailed no matter how I tried to restructure the room. In hindsight, it occurred to me how—on paper—I had imagined the one (Sartori) study would naturally converge with the other (ELL classroom), and together they would become what was more or less a balanced amalgamation of the two.

The moment I stepped into the classroom, my approach to language learning outside of standard curricular goals and objectives not only disrupted the space, it also set off a series of other unforeseeable disruptions that set off equal amounts of hypothesizing. In preparing field work, I realized I had imagined what I refer to as a hypothetical space. I borrow the concept of the “hypothetical space” from prominent theatre director Peter Brooks’ (1968) groundbreaking book *The Empty Space*. Brooks’ timeless lectures are philosophic musings on the polyvalent spaces of theatre. He describes four symbolic playing areas identified as: *The Deadly Theatre*, *The Holy Theatre*, *The Rough Theatre*, and *The Immediate Theatre*. I imagine hypothetical space as located within The Holy Theatre, also known as *The Theatre of the Invisible-Made-Visible* (p. 47). Hypothetical space (like the empty space of the Holy Theatre) contains both a promise of success and a threat of failure, largely because it is a space that resides within the language dilemma of the study of research versus the practical outcomes of research. In Brooks’

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<sup>154</sup> So, who is the Other? ...it is not the Other who, is defining himself as the Other, establishes the One. The Other is posed as such by the One in defining himself as the One. But if the Other is not to regain the status of being the One, he must be submissive enough to accept this alien point of view.” (de Beauvoir, 1978, xviii)

emblematic space of *The Holy Theatre*, he perceives that deep in our thoughts “the stage is a place where the invisible can appear”—much as my hypothetical space of NM in school exists in all its glory (p. 47). On paper, hypothetically speaking, I could predictably amend or avert any potentially problematic areas that might present themselves and create difficulties for the students, the overall study, and myself. In the immediacy of the actual experience and my role as participant-observer, there was very little time for perspective or reflection, thus greatly reducing the possibilities for objective strategizing—which I could do in theory.

In theory, the Sartori and Lecoq mask/movement paradigms harmoniously shifted and interrelated with one another, creating a theoretical practice in which to apply my alternative pedagogy. Yet when I actually visited the ELL classroom I was confronted with some very real facts, such as the students’ varied English language levels of comprehension, the significantly influential (to the pedagogy) and almost inescapable configuration of the classroom (tables, chairs, blackboards, bookshelves, reading center—including student/teacher roles), and the participants’ preconceived (and somewhat limited) gender/culture/age influenced notions about the body.

Lecoq’s work was often called “think-on-your-feet-theatre” (Chamberlain and Yarrow, 2002, p. 13). His theatre training taught me to enter a space with the expectation that what I anticipate of/from the space will be challenged. In the planning of this hypothetical space, I had anticipated hypothetical scenarios when, in truth, I was only prepared insofar as to expect the unexpected.

At Sartori’s *Centro*, when I did not know or understand something in the mask-making process I turned to other participants in the workshop as a way to help get my bearings and orient myself in the learning. In hindsight, I see how I had sought out parallel connections in relation to

my learning and life experience as a way to understand and, in some manner, address the unfamiliar of the Sartori workshop. I began to consider how the inability to correlate new and unknown information with prior learning could potentially be a destabilizing experience for the ELL student-participants of my In-class study. The manner in which this observation emerged from my field studies, where my role as a student provided insight into my role as a researcher (particularly in relation to my In-class study), has led me to consider the concept of resistance and some unintended consequences that followed.

Peter McLaren's (1998) discussion of resistance and its association to the curriculum as a form of cultural politics (social reproduction) helps me to theorize and think through the implications of the resistance that I experienced (p. 188). McLaren identifies conflicts of resistance in learning practices through the concept of a "collision of cultures," and directs particular attention to the impact on students' of subordinate class, race, and gender-divided groups.<sup>155</sup> He demonstrates how conspicuous and inconspicuous forms of resistance manifest themselves through a myriad of ways. A few of the obvious forms include resisting instruction, troubled grades, failure to attend class and/or poor attendance, issues of behaviour, struggles to fit in and socialize with peers and so forth. Aside from the initial awkward and self-conscious moments felt by the youth participants of my In-class study, I did not detect any of these overt forms of resistance. However, by virtue of observing, recording, and interpreting their participation, had me wondering about what Henri Giroux (in conversation with McLaren), identifies as a covert form of resistance—repression (p. 191). I was acutely aware of an ever-present tension between my student-participants, who were in the process of becoming Canadian

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<sup>155</sup> McLaren incorporates much of Henry Giroux's *Theories of Resistance in Education: Towards a Pedagogy for the Opposition* (2001) in this section. At the time, the not yet published book was accredited as *Theory and Resistance* (original italics).

citizens, and the school system's position, which reflected and sustained the logic of "dominant social practices and structures" (McLaren, 1998, p. 190).

In the short time spent with my ELL students, I began to wonder if my research was reinforcing dominant/subordinate ideologies about their newcomer status, especially given their forms of resistance. Prompted by the young male student who said that he "felt like a lab rat" when I disclosed the full purpose of my work in his ELL class, raised some significant questions:

- 1) In mainstream ELL education, are acts of resistance underemphasized, overlooked, or deemed temporal by the larger learning objective of English acquisition?
- 2) Is resistance a necessary, temporary state in learning, where it is both a coping mechanism and a form of self-assertion?
- 3) Was my study, in some capacity, perpetuating a form of social reproduction?

In an effort to unpack what could very well be my conditioned (unintentional) response to advancing newcomer integration research vis a vis concepts of the *other* and *othering*, the lab-rat comment led me to take a closer look at a few facts in place and critical pedagogy theories that conflict ELL curriculum. I needed to look at the study alternatively, perhaps from a teacher's perspective.

## **Testing the Waters**

I introduced the neutral mask at the *Okanagan Workshop on Innovation in Language Teaching* (OWILT). Two years since I first attended that inspiring educational research conference chaired by Max van Manen, now, full circle, I was a panelist speaking on the (phenomenology) subject body as a learning method. Those in attendance were, for the most part, scholars of applied linguistics representing universities across the country. Focusing on the

primacy of movement as the foundation for language meaning, I shaped the workshop according to two objectives:

1. To further my research by launching a condensed application of the pre-language supplemental derived from Lecoq's NM—so as to assess the potential of an embodied relationship to language through ELL curricula with the conference participants.
2. To lead a mini-workshop in which participants could experience a sense of heightened body-self-awareness in order to feel how personal movement, i.e. the idiosyncratic ways in which they each move, uniquely reflects coded corporeal syntax—or how a modality of language already exists in our physical being.

Strategically placed at the end of the day, I asked the group to leave their iPads, laptops, eBooks and all other tech-gadgets and to join me as we temporarily left the *tiered* “smart” lecture room. I led them down the hall to the front foyer where, over the lunch hour, I had recreated a mini-theatre complete with audience rows and a playing space. Given the time constraint of my presentation, this was an intentional disruption in keeping with, and reflective of, my ELL field study.

At its essence, NM is used to create awareness for the actor (here, conference participants), which includes the surrounding physical space and, more importantly, their place *in* the space. Thus to meet the first objective I began with a series of basic exercises (*sans* mask) as a way for the participants to experience the body outside of their socially represented identifications, i.e. how they identify—or are identified—through race, gender, and identity (professor, husband/wife, father/mother and so forth). I invited the participants to help create a standing circle. The circle is a significant spatial configuration in that it brings immediate awareness to the other bodies, (vulnerably) in full-body view, occupying the shared space. Standing in the centre,

I began to speak about my desire to use this conference opportunity to try out the intersections of my divergent themes. This preamble was mostly to offer a moment for the nervousness and chatter to dissipate—as mentioned, my time-slot was the end of the day, after eight other conference paper presentations, two breaks, and a formal luncheon. As I spoke, I simultaneously imitated some of the language the participants standing around the circle were “speaking” through the body as they stood intently listening. These included arms akimbo, arms crossed at the chest, hands clasped, tucked into pants pockets, swaying by their sides, fidgety fingers, and so forth. I felt this would effectively demonstrate my intention without having to explain it verbally —this too was strategic. It took a moment but soon they became aware of what I was doing and conversely what they were doing in relation to them and their bodies—all in the simple act of standing. I asked that they bring awareness to the composition of their body as they stood. Were their feet together or apart? Were they leaning on their haunches, feet pigeon-toed, or shoulder width? I demonstrated how to redress the body of this unique language and replace it with a “neutral” stance—in an attempt to void symbolic speech of any kind. I asked that their arms, a soft drop from the shoulders, rest at their sides. The legs parallel, hip-width apart with weight equally distributed on each leg, to centre the head, and relax the face of all expression. I asked them to try to become aware of when “habits” in their postural stance and facial expression fell back into a place of comfort, or patterned familiarity.

With little time remaining, I invited two volunteers to join me the centre of the circle while the rest took a seat in the chairs provided. Our backs to the audience, I presented each with a NM and worked privately with them, providing basic instruction to demonstrate a simple NM exercise. My instructions were along the lines of slowing down movement, making certain the mask was properly placed on the face, tucking in the neck, slight adjustments centering the

head—and reminding them to breathe! I too then joined the others who sat across from the playing space. Providing verbal direction, I had the volunteers slowly turn to face the group. A hush fell over the room as the masks commanded attention. I asked the volunteers to just stand—in neutral—and *be* the body in the mask. They would later share the degree of difficulty in merely standing, largely because they could feel their faces overworking, as if to compensate for the stillness of the body. Carefully I asked one to turn the head (at the neck and not at the waist) and face the other, while the other continued to face the audience. This very small movement elicited small gasps of intrigue from those observing. It spoke volumes in the sense of what it triggered *vis-à-vis* intentionality and conceptual-propositional structures of meaning making, albeit in this instance, it was of a physiological applied practice (Johnson 2007; Kemp 2012).

Through rudimentary exercises such as this, I wanted to impart to the OWILT participants, the underuse, lack of use, and even misuse of the body in ELL curricula. I hoped to convey how the mask serves as somewhat of a *tabula rasa* upon which the wearer is invited to journey back to the “point of departure” to un-know, or rather, *know anew* through gesture and movement (Rolfe, 1977, p. 19). This “return to zero” (*neutre*), facilitated by the NM, reorders language learning that begins with physical action for thought (meaning-making) to language (text) (Chamberlain and Yarrow 2002, p. 27). However, the process of reordering inevitably gives rise to the socialized noise and politics that complicate the body and identity, well before spoken language even begins.

As scholars informing practice and educators standing before students, the participants experienced how embodied situatedness is very much a part of language learning, and how voicing language, even non-native language, is an active expression of self (Hastings and Manning, 2004). I wanted to demonstrate how critically the body contributions to language and

the need to explore the notion of alterity in linguistic practice (p. 292). I hoped using NM as an interpretive interlocutor helped them experience the speaking body in the performance of spoken language so they could recognize the *non-conscious* ways the body contributes to meaning making by demonstrating how the body, as a thinking entity, and its language (of movement) are more than merely little helpers to/for speech. I wanted to emphasize this largely overlooked invisible aspect of language learning and to demonstrate how drawing from newcomer students' body of culture as the storehouse of their *experiential knowledge*, differentiates the application of spoken English language from the performance of its cultural ethos.

### **Final Thoughts**

Accustomed to the *via negativa* approach ingrained in me through years of Lecoq-based work, I realize how my selection of aspects of my research reported here mainly concentrate on the difficult aspects of my field studies. I would like to add, there was a great deal of fun, adventure and joyful memories made from both field experiences! To this day, I continue international friendships with fellow participants in Brazil, Germany, Italy, United States, and the West Indies who took part in the Sartori master-class. As well, in the school months following the In-class study, I received email messages from the classroom teachers updating me on their students' progress, and sharing how they chose to incorporate aspects of the work in their lesson plans.

In her dissertation developing a new form of education she calls *Critical Aesthetic Pedagogy* (2006), Yolanda Medina writes, "we are living in an era of rigorous academic standards and accountability (p. 111). Although a broad and sweeping statement (and one of a U.S. focused study at that) I concur with this remark, recognizing all the systemic and procedural aspects (test scores, assessments, percentiles) right here in Ontario. In revisioning the English

language-learning classroom to include the neutral mask, perhaps the most difficult obstacle is how ‘in flux’ this type of a learning approach agitates the accountability sought out of these institutionalized structures. In theatre, on a stage, these disruptions are a welcomed shaking of foundation. In order for this type of supplemental to succeed in mainstream education, it asks that Boards, schools, principals, language education, be willing to revise the acquisition and development of English proficiency by investing in the newcomer student’s most foundational expression of the learning self in English. My study returns this learning self to the home of the body. Elizabeth Ellsworth (2005) writes:

Bodies have affective somatic responses, as they inhabit pedagogy and space. Specific to pedagogy is the experience of the corporeality of the body’s time and space when it is in the midst of learning. Because this experience arises out of an assemblage of mind/brain/body with the time and space of pedagogy, we must approach an investigation into the experience of the learning self through that assemblage. How, then, might we think about knowledge in the making? How might we think of pedagogy experimentally? (pp. 4-5)

In the face of new media and technology directions for youth development, the overall purpose of the mask in ELL (i.e. the learning objective) is to assist in bringing awareness to the body as home in learning. However, given the unique experience of the journey into the poetic body, it is unrealistic to expect that each student will arrive at the same learning outcome. Similar to Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the mask serves as a conceptual framework for learning and development *in which* to learn and develop. That is, embodied learning creates the possibility of development by way of socio-cultural frames to “situate learning within a relationship among mutually dependent individuals” (John-Steiner, Panofsky,

Smith, 1994, p. 8). Largely as a way to alleviate how socio-cultural parameters, influenced by English language learning (ELL), contribute to tokenizations of ethnic/ racial (minority) students through dominant narratives of physical representation.

I ask that schools shoulder the responsibility of welcoming the diversity etched in/on students' bodies by assisting in demystifying performative constraints that continue to give these bodies' agency (Butler, 1993). Of course, there are established views and mainstream ideologies in the shared space of living. My research is not proposing that these be—or can be—denied in education. What I am suggesting is deeper consideration about how these ideas are conveyed and defined to the student—for the student—and even *by* the student—through the body.

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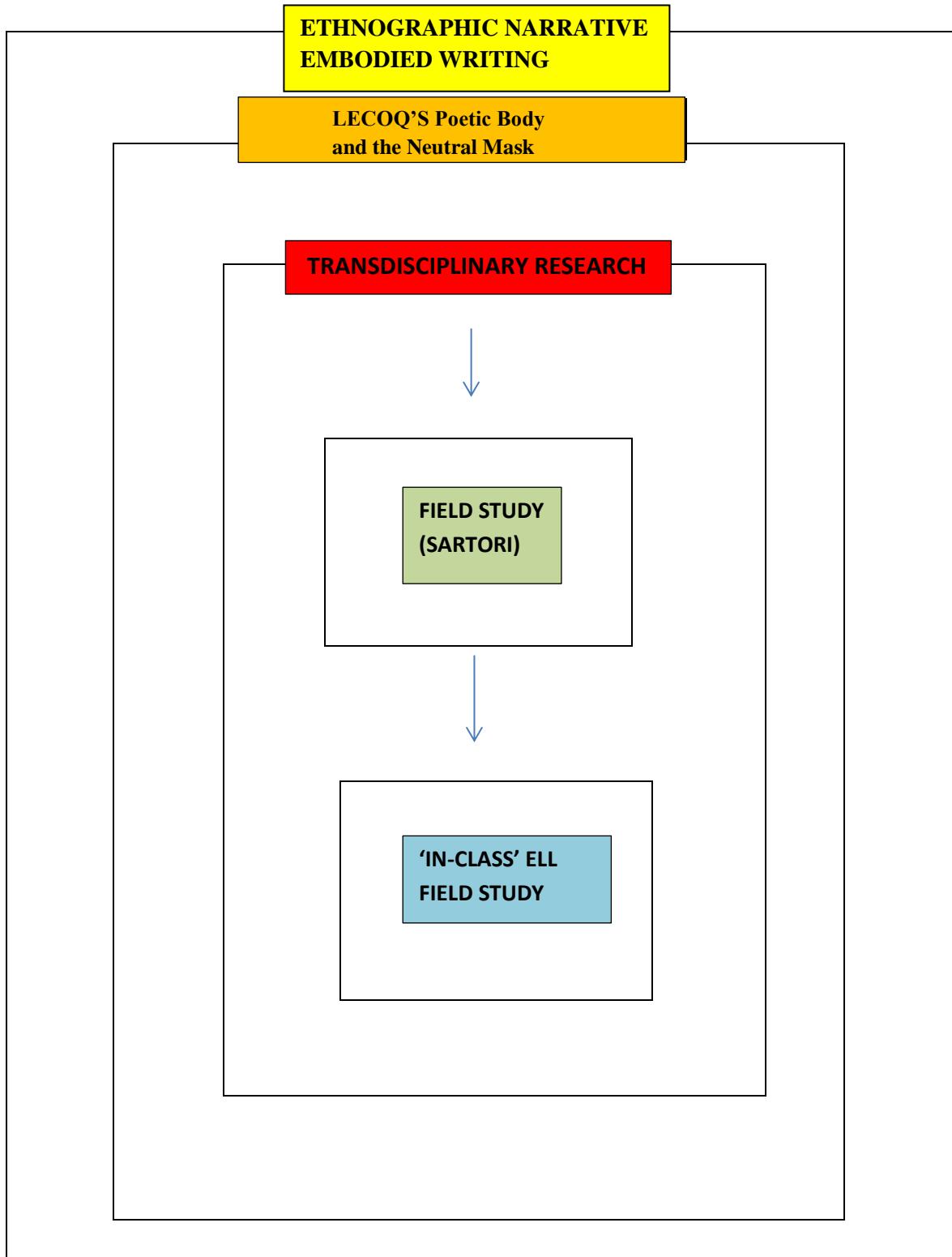
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Figure 0:2 The Neutral Mask



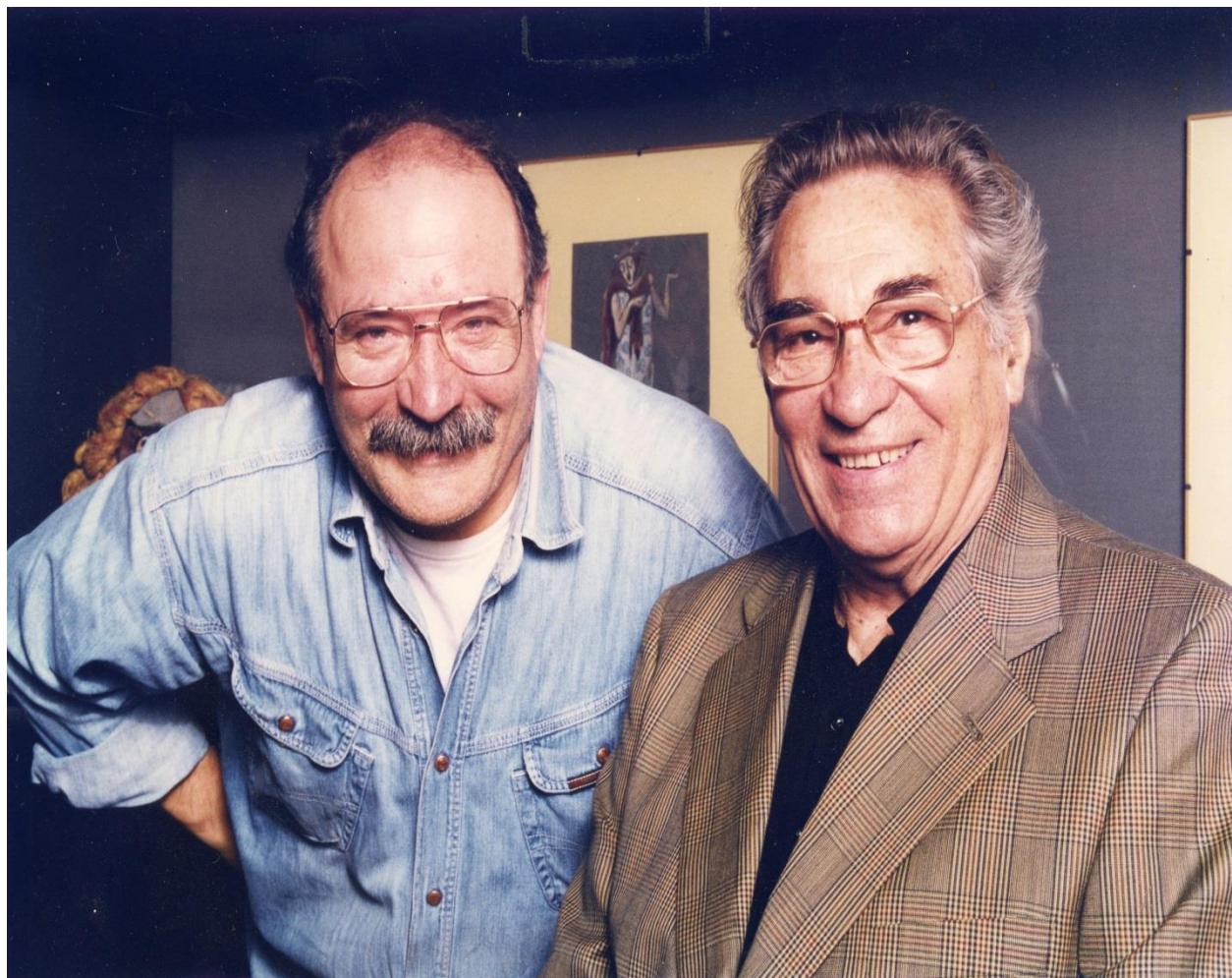
Figure 0:3 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 3:2 Amleto Sartori (left) and Jacques Lecoq (right)** – courtesy of *Museo Internazionale della Maschera* archives



**Figure 3:3 Donato Sartori (left) and Jacques Lecoq (right)** – courtesy of *Museo Internazionale della Maschera* archives



**Figure 3:4 Sartori Mask Master Class 5-week's Schedule**

Time	Phases	Content	Learning
<b>Week 1</b> (at Centro)	Introduction	Topics included the history of the mask and masking, the Ameleto Sartori and Jacques Lecoq collaboration, the founding of the Museum of Mask and Gestural Structures.	Lecture/Theory format: -Masks of Ancient Greece -Cultural Masks and Artifacts -Nature's way of masking/camouflage -Rebirth of the Mask
<b>Week 2</b> (Centro)	Mask Design and Research	Small group discussion vis a vis ideas for our individual mask designs. Drawing pencil sketches including precision dimensions that would act as the measurement patterns for the raw materials in the building of three dimensional models.	As visitors to the town of Abano Terme, we had access to the library and archive facilities there, prior preparation was encouraged and a few participants had arrived with considerations for their mask.
<b>Week 3-4</b> (Studio)	Mask Building and Construction	Taking the Mask Research Design beyond pencil sketches.	This was comprised of four phases consisting of: clay mould, <i>papier-mâché</i> , <i>wood carving</i> , leather preparation (finishing, wetting, moulding, pressing, cutting).
<b>Week 5</b> (Studio/Theatre)	Mask Ornamentation and Embodiment Technique	Spray treatments and painting of the mask: a tutorial on colour, paint application and relationship to the diverse materials. 'Play' and bringing the mask to life.	Mask painting, engraving, harnessing with elastic. Movement pedagogy under the direction of Fabio Mangolini, with a final performance for the Abano Terme community.

**Figure 3:5 five phases of mask construction in various working stages  
(Cinque fasi di costruzione della maschera)**



**Figure 3:6 In-Class Field Study Fall Semester 2012**

*Each workshop began with a body warm-up	<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Day 2</b>
<b>Week 1</b> Large group exercises	introduction to pantomime as a way to address culturally coded language recognized in the body, or ‘speech gesture’ comprised of familiar movements, such as a wagging finger, a pointing finger, a shrug, hands clenched in fists in boxer pose, looking at an imaginary watch on ones wrist,	Exploring play and playing through games: ‘Cat and Mouse’, ‘Simon Says’, spontaneous movement, abstract movement, moving without thinking, displacing the body in space, movement to the beat of a drum, that feel awkward, odd, movement that makes us laugh
<b>Week 2</b> Individual concentrated work and partner work	The Body as Instrument: bringing awareness to students own bodies by analyzing the different ways the body <i>can</i> move, this includes isolating parts of the body, examining what limbs and muscles assist in a movement such as in the raising of an arm, the collective sequence necessary in the taking of ‘a’ step.	Working with a partner identify the shapes in the body: the square of the torso, the rectangles in the thighs, the cylinder of the neck ... using large sheets of paper, draw a stick person and superimpose the shapes that correlate to a body part of the ‘stick figure’. Tally up the shapes, how many circles, how many triangles ...
<b>Week 3</b> Small groups	Body of Culture: looking at movements and gestures particular to each student’s culture, how does movement and gesture differ, when movement is altered, restricted, the limits of (our) movements	Preliminary exercises to the introduction of the neutral mask: familiarizing the class with the mask object, with covering the face and inability to understand movement through assistance of the face
<b>Week 4</b> Individual/small group work	Introduction to the neutral mask (NM) – poetic body basics, new movement derived from the body in the mask	NM technique, preparing/presenting little silent scenes that spoke language through the body

Figure 3:7 Student/NM In-Class study participants – standing neutral.



**Figure 3:8 Student/NM In-Class study participants - random movement.**



Figure 3:9 Student/NM In-Class study participants – moving words (a).



Figure 3:10 Student/NM In-Class study participants – moving words (b).



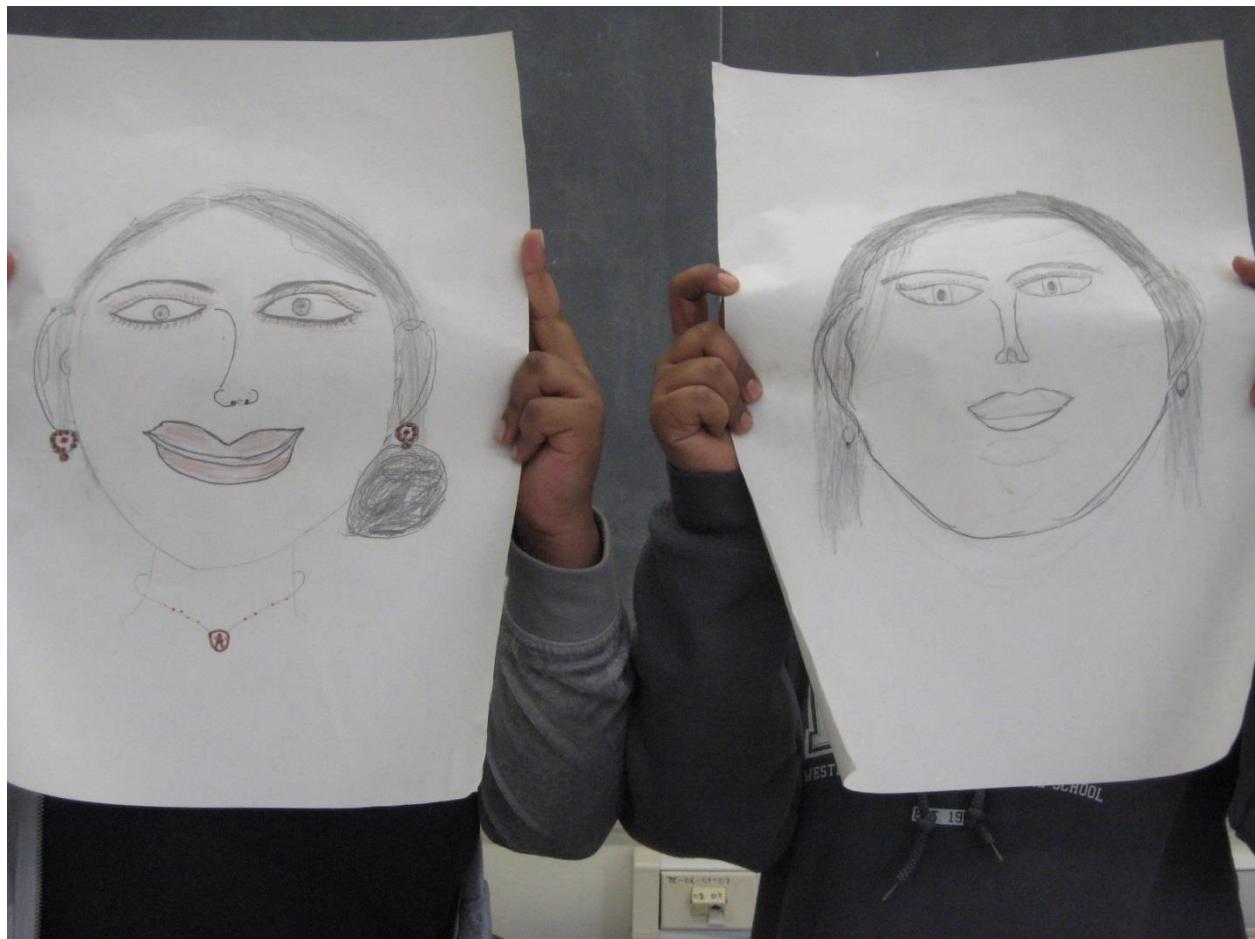
Figure 3:11 Student/NM In-Class study participants – moving words with a partner.



Figure 3:12 Student/NM In-Class study participants-moving words in a scene of 'dialogue'.



Figure 3:13 Student's Pencil Face Sketches (a)



**Figure 3:14 Student's Pencil Face Sketches (b)**

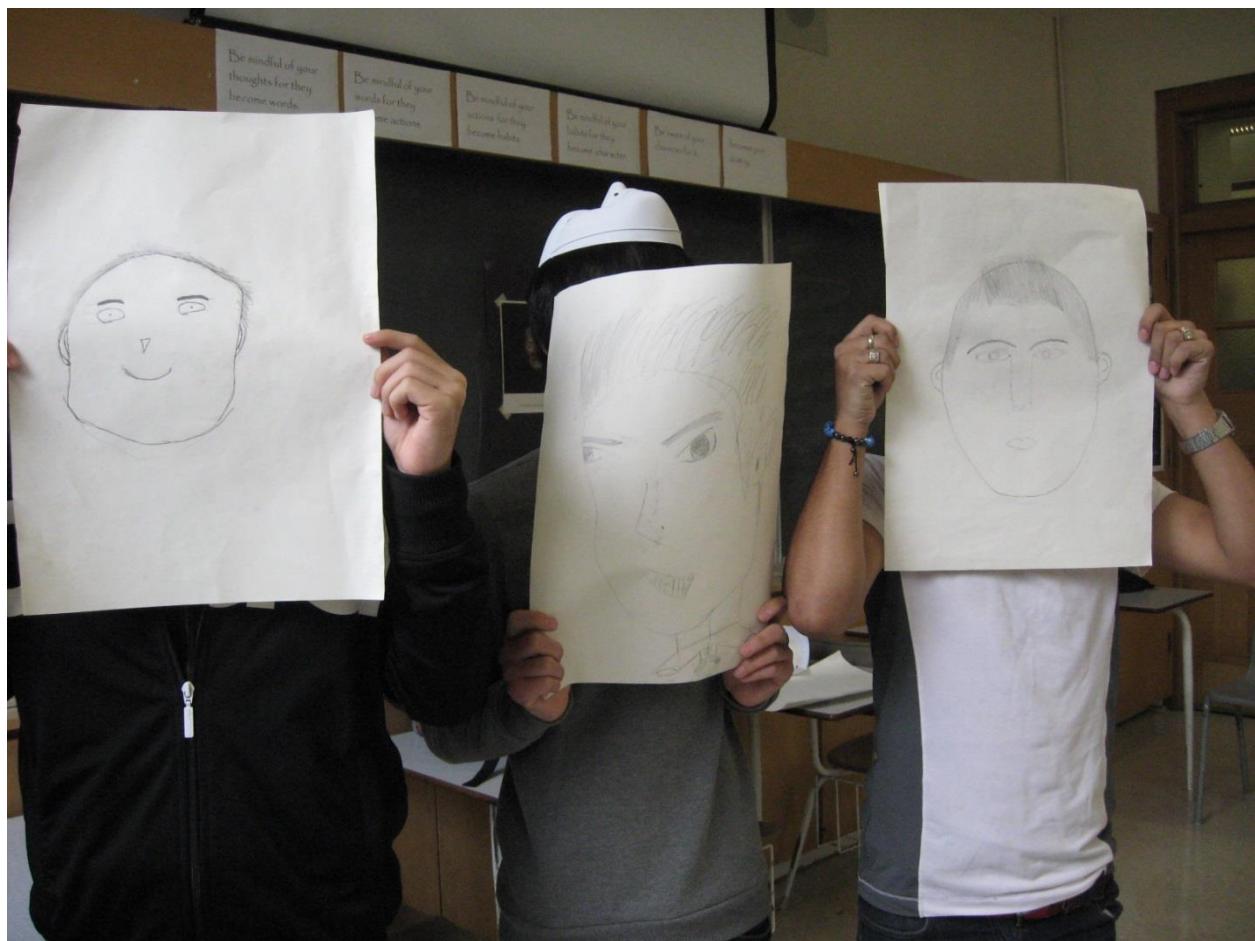


Figure 3:15 Student's Pencil Face Sketches (c)

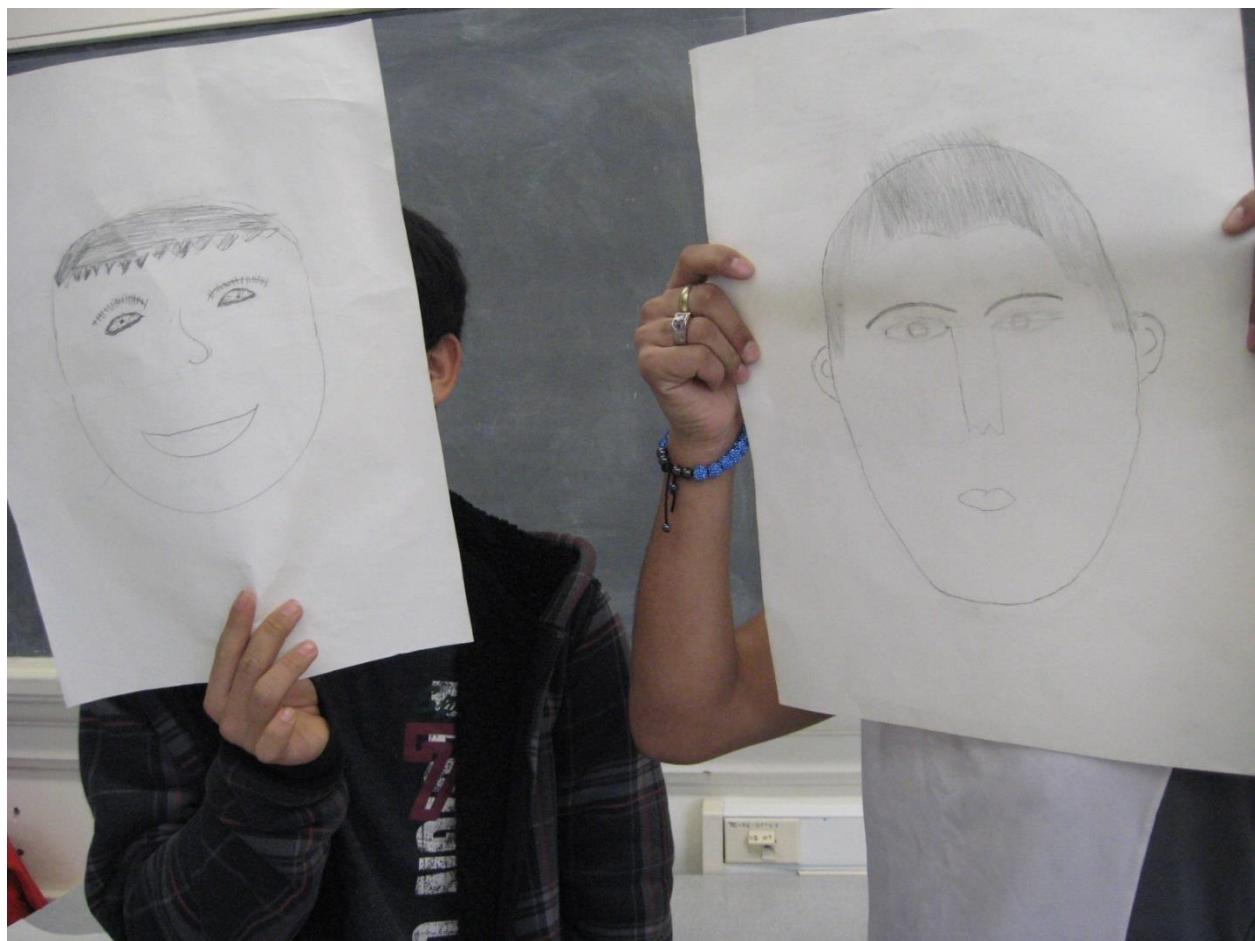


Figure 4:1 Movement to language body-alphabet

