Creative drama as a source for literacy development

B. Joanne Kirkner

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CREATIVE DRAMA AS A SOURCE FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education: Reading Option

by
B. Joanne Kirkner
June 1995
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Date
5-8-95
ABSTRACT

Because each child brings to the classroom their own individuality, to be intertwined with the other students in the classroom, the low-progress readers need to feel their individuality will be recognized. A common concern heard from teachers deals with what to do with a third grade student who demonstrates low-progress in reading? What needs to be kept in mind is that when low-progress readers enter third grade they are not empty vessels.

To help make this belief clearer, one needs to understand that learning is a process and each attempt is a step in that process. Students achieve knowledge by different means. I find that a child allowed to learn from one's personal style finds purpose in learning and develops a desire to read. With this in mind I have designed this project to be used as a resource for teachers wanting to implement creative drama, in the classroom, as an avenue for improving reading abilities of low-progress readers. Drama is a positive, joyful, and fulfilling way of learning—a model for education across the curriculum (Kukla, 1987). Reading and drama are closely linked in the learning process. Through drama, teachers help children acquire the means to more fully understand what they have experienced (Booth, 1985). When children dramatize, they are drawing on
the same language and thinking skills they use in reading. According to Lehr (1985), it is important for the users of drama, as an enhancement to their reading program, to understand that creative drama is "child-oriented dramatic play, which is created by the participant for the participant." The most important aspect to making this project work is to have a risk free environment to allow creative drama to take its intended course.

This manual has three specific sections each focusing on a specific outcome. One needs to keep in mind that even through these sections are separate they do have some commonalties. Some of the techniques build from other techniques and some branch out from others. The first section of this resource manual deals with the introduction of creative drama into the classroom. (The specific outcome of this section is to stimulate the imagination and promote creative thinking through the strategies of pantomime, role playing, and imagery.) The next section will deal with ways to develop critical thinking. The specific outcome of this section will be the development of the student's comprehension skills. The methods used will include puppetry, improvisational drama, and movement. The third section of the manual will deal with student's self evaluation of their creative drama. The specific outcome of this section will be development of self esteem and an
awareness of others. The method used in this section will be video taping performances for visual self observations.

It is my belief that creative drama promotes language development which strengthens the reading process. Just like the reading process one needs to focus on the process of drama not the outcome. Reading and writing are used best when children are allowed the opportunity to use them in various situations which they perceive as meaningful. The creative drama techniques described in this resource manual can provide those situations that can influence the functions of reading and writing in a meaningful way.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project is dedicated to my students, for it is their desires to learn that have touched my life and given my teaching a clearer direction.

A special thank you goes to my family—Jack, Amy, and Lara—for without their loving support this project would not be a reality.
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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A common concern heard from teachers deals with what to do with a third grade student who demonstrates low-progress in reading? Over and over third grade teachers say, "What do I do with a reading deficient student? The student appears to have no word attack skills or sound recognition and they are in the third grade!" Parents blame the teachers and teachers are confused as to what the best approach is to reach these students. What are some possible answers? Before throwing in the towel, teachers need to stop and look at the reading process. What needs to be kept in mind is that when low-progress readers enter third grade they are not empty vessels.

To help make this belief clearer, one needs to understand that learning is a process and each attempt is a step in that process. Students achieve knowledge by different means. When low-progress readers enter third grade they have been exposed to a variety of teaching styles. If the child is not functioning at "grade level" in spite of this exposure, the difficulty could be that the sounds of the English language are not always heard or the rules of the language always remembered. As these students are immersed in a program that values quality literature and not made to focus on their weaknesses, they begin seeing a
purpose to reading and feeling that they can be a part of
the Literacy Club (Smith, 1986).

Because each child brings to the classroom their own
individuality, to be intertwined with the other students in
the classroom, the low-progress readers need to feel their
individuality will be recognized. The low-progress reader
may not read fluently but they are print enriched just from
their environment and their environment has meaning to them.
Therefore if these students were observed in their home
environment, where they are comfortable, the educator would
find the low-progress reader acting out what they know about
reading. This leads to looking at what the reading process
is all about.

Reading approaches can be perceived as having three
models placed on a continuum. The far left of the continuum
is the decoding model or behavioral view. In the middle of
the continuum is the skills or traditionally based model.
To the far right of the continuum is the holistic model.

The decoding model looks at the individual parts of
language. It focuses heavily on the sound-symbol
relationship. Therefore, meaning does not occur until the
word is sounded out. Low-progress readers are easily
frustrated with this approach because reading has no meaning
to them. Getting through the struggle of sounding out all
the letters in each word becomes so laborious that the student will downshift. Downshifting occurs when a student's mind becomes overwhelmed, causing a shut down of responses. In this case the student may become fidgety and just stare at the page and say nothing. In the Decoding approach, the teacher gives out extrinsic rewards giving some worth for mastering the parts. If they don't master the parts, no reward. In this model the reading material is completely controlled by the teacher and the teacher's manual. There is no choice from the student's viewpoint. This approach keeps most low-progress readers from making any gains in unlocking the process of reading.

A skills based model is one that concentrates on four main components: letter/sound relationships, controlled vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. All of these components fit together like a puzzle. The puzzle parts can be taken apart, but must be fitted together properly to make reading happen. It is in this control factor that low-progress readers fail because letter/sound relationships have no meaning to them. The frustration of trying to master one piece of the puzzle before going on overwhelms many low-progress readers causing downshifting.

The holistic model is on the far right of the continuum. This end of the continuum is referred to as "Whole Language". The term Whole Language has been
misinterpreted by some who have tried to fit the skilled base model of reading into the whole language approach. This is not what the holistic model is all about. This model is about kids using real language; it is meaning-based. Instead of perceiving this model as puzzle pieces fitting together in a certain way, this model is perceived as a circle with the center focusing on the semantic system which is meaning. The next layer builds from the center and has to do with the syntactic system of language, which is word order. The following layer is the graphophonemic system, which is letter/sound followed by the pragmatic layer which deals with the context in which language is formed. This system gives the understanding as to how and why the parts fit into the whole, but it is not the main focus of the reading process in the holistic model.

By starting with the semantic system or meaning, the teacher focuses on what has meaning to the student. Students develop an understanding that they have a voice in what is learned. By having a voice in their learning, it becomes personal, therefore it has meaning to them. Taking into consideration the student's schema (Smith, 1986), experiential information organized in the brain, empowers the teacher to become a better facilitator to students. Believing that every student is not an empty vessel, the teacher can guide the student through the uses of the
syntactic system and the graphophonemic system that come up in the piece of literature that is presented and interesting to that student. Giving students the power of choice, as to what interests them, fosters learning that makes sense. It makes the student responsible for learning. The important aspect here is that all the language systems are working together to help empower the student, therefore, the holistic model of reading is child-centered.

Theoretical Foundations of the Project

It is with a strong belief in the holistic model of reading that I present this master's project. I find that a child allowed to learn from one's personal style finds purpose in learning and develops a desire to read. The process of this learning is a natural one and can be referred to as language acquisition. This is an essential element of the holistic model of reading, for without language acquisition there is no meaning for the child as they hear, speak, listen, and write what others tell them. The holistic model of reading centers around the idea that a child is learning constantly and most of all the child wants to make sense of this learning. It is this basis that forms the community of learners in my classroom. My students help me develop the curriculum to meet their needs. They show me that by giving them choices and allowing for language interaction students have a natural desire to learn. The
al language development, the more variety of choices, this leads to interest and then turning the learning "bulb" on. I have found that a good avenue for turning this learning bulb on is the use of creative drama.

Creative drama essentially is a form of imaginative play. Creative drama is different from random play because it is facilitated by a teacher who attempts to guide the play into a definite form. This form consists of a beginning, a middle, and a conclusion. Creative drama is improvisational. There is no script. It is a spontaneous self-expression of an individual, created on the spot. The student may reenact a story that has previously been read; but through creative drama, it is performed in a student's own words to convey the student's own meaning. This process allows students to digest and to translate various educational concepts into a meaningful form for them (Kelner, 1993). Creative drama is a way for the low-progress reader to experience the key elements of the learning process.

This author intends for this project to be used as a resource for teachers wanting to implement creative drama, in the classroom, as a avenue for improving reading abilities of low-progress readers. Good directions and a solid foundation of the expectations are necessary items for creative drama to work. If the teacher's outlook is more on
product outcome rather than the process, this project will not be as effective. It is my intention to help the first time user of creative drama feel successful when working with low-progress readers as well as finding creative drama enjoyable and rewarding.
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The driving force for this literature review is to build a good foundation of support to empower and develop student's literacy through creative drama. The research dealing with the use of creative drama to empower and develop a reading program is very supportive. According to Bidwell 1988, drama in the reading classroom comes highly recommended. An organization that highly recommends drama to enhance the reading program is the International Reading Association. Their recommendation is to use drama in some form as an effective means of promoting the use of language and encouraging varied responses to literature (Bidwell, 1988). These effective approaches should include the development of schema, metacognition, oral language development and a renewed focus on literature. Thus creative drama effectively follows these approaches to integrate language arts. Some researchers refer to drama in two categories; spontaneous drama and drama. Drama means a play in its polished form (Stewig, 1983) focusing on product or outcome, whereas, spontaneous drama is focusing on the process for the individual child.

With the idea of spontaneous drama in mind this review of the literature focuses on how spontaneous drama can raise the reading ability of low-progress readers as well as to determine how spontaneous drama fits into a holistic
classroom setting. It is helpful if a teacher looks at how spontaneous drama fits into a holistic classroom setting because the two approaches come from the same philosophy. McLaren (1988) suggest that spontaneous drama should form the nub of the multidisciplinary curriculum. For clarification spontaneous drama, creative drama, and story drama will be used interchangeably through the remained of this review.

 ✓ Drama is a positive, joyful, and fulfilling way of learning—a model for education across the curriculum (Kukla, 1987). Creative drama in education offers teachers the opportunity to negotiate the content of the work, alter the relationship between teacher and students, and transform the social structure of the classroom (O'Neill, 1989). To help give foundation to this one needs to understand that reading is basically a private experience where as drama is a shared experience. When a child reads, they react and respond on a personable level free from outside interventions. Creative drama on the other hand is interactive and it is this participating model that gives the child the experience to grow in a different way. When children read or listen to a story, they create personal images in their minds. In drama, they help build a group image (Booth, 1985). Drama can be a powerful antidote to the kind of alienation many students feel in the school situation,
where everything they bring to the educational encounter is ignored or rejected. Authentic dialogue and drama can both be effective weapons against alienation (O'Neill, 1989).

Developing Critical Thinking Skills

Reading and drama are closely linked in the learning process. They interact with each other to develop the same personal resources in the child, building links between print and experience, dream and reality, and self and others (Mcinnes, 1983). Teaching must be concerned with promoting thinking/feeling strengths in students whether they are interacting with print or people. The pressure and the authenticity of the dramatic moment can help children create new knowledge and make different and necessary connections (Booth, 1985).

Reading comprehension is an understanding of information being stored in such a way as to have accessibility to that information when needed. Children's understandings will be determined by their own personal knowledge, gleaned from their actual and vicarious experiences, and from the particular social and cultural contexts that surround their lives. Teachers can enhance comprehension by using techniques calling for maximum participation of all children, by inviting a wide variety of responses, and by giving children various art forms with which to respond (Booth, 1985). Drama can be used as a
check of comprehension or as a way to motivate a child to read, but the real power of drama is in helping the child to make learning happen. Through drama, teachers help children acquire the means to more fully understand what they have experienced (Booth, 1985). When children dramatize, they are drawing on the same language and thinking skills they use in reading. Drama offers the possibility of a synthesis of language, feeling, and thought which can enrich the individual's inner world, and develop competence and confidence in operating within it (O'Neill & Lambert, 1982). Although the child is in a make-believe situation in story and drama, the real world continues to exist, and the learning that occurs for that child lies in this negotiation of meanings—symbolic and actual—taking place in both modes (Booth, 1985). They must comprehend to be able to express details of the story sequence, word meanings, plot and character (Bidwell, 1988). Thus, children find valid reasons to use reading, speaking and listening when they are preparing for and presenting dramatizations. They see real reasons for reading when they know they are going to dramatize a story (Harp, 1988). Edmiston, Enciso and King, (1987) see drama functioning at the center of language growth and learning. Patrick Verriour (1987) values dramatic contexts because they give children the means to take control of their own thinking and language.
According to Harp (1988), when children know that they are going to dramatize a story, they read it with an intensity that is not often seen otherwise. The significance of drama as an expressive form of thinking and feeling, according to Bolton (1980), "lies in its concern with the process of personal engagement with the objective world" (p. 27). Heathcote (1983) speaks in terms of levels of student involvement, as follows: "I must first attract their attention. If I have their attention I can gain their involvement, then I have a chance for their investment and from that their concern. If I have their concern I have hope for obsession" (p. 31). When children know that they will get to give life to the characters, they really try to relate to them.

It is important for the users of drama, as an enhancement to their reading program, to understand that creative drama is "child-oriented dramatic play, which is created by the participant for the participant" (Lehr, 1985). Creative drama then is an art form for children that emphasizes process instead of product (Stewig, 1983). There are certain strategies and techniques a teacher can employ to engage the students at both the thought and feeling levels. Strategy is the frame through which the students will be taken into the action. Activity is the strategy in action. Technique is the device that the
teacher uses in order to translate strategy into action (Morgan & Saxton, 1985).

A truly holistic classroom addresses the four key elements of language learning: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. By using drama in the classroom students use speaking to improvise and reflect upon the results, writing to extend a speech or smooth a transition, and listening to get cues and hear feedback from reflections, therefore creative drama fits very nicely into the holistic classroom. Spontaneous drama has the capacity to unlock the low-progress reader by using these elements in such a way as to build self-esteem and confidence, allowing for literacy development. Drama helps children to understand concepts, face issues, clarify values, and grasp the essential "truth" of a story. These are the skills and capacities needed for successful reading comprehension, which gives an effective means of teaching children what all good reading is about (Kukla, 1987).

Self Evaluation or Reflection

According to Morgan and Saxton (1985) reflection provides opportunities for students to extract from the collective experience those things which relate to their life experiences to reveal new understandings. It is the frame through which the students are taken out of the action of the plot and put into the action of the theme.
Reflection techniques should not be employed only at the end of a drama experience. Reflection during the drama can give the student an opportunity to synthesize the experience "so far", granting time to sort out the relationship between oneself and oneself-in-role and to evaluate one's commitment to the drama. Reflection should include, according to Morgan and Saxton (1985):

*Intonation.* Through speech the teacher creates an atmosphere which is supportive, quiet, and non-judgmental.

*Language.* The teacher in role should use elevated language if the activity is formal. Such language is not appropriate for out-of-role reflection, however, as it distances rather than personalizes.

*Timing.* Choosing a moment for reflection depends on the teacher recognizing the moment when both the collective and the individual have something to reflect upon.

*Placing.* For private reflection, the students need space to work independently. For public reflection, the teacher must decide on the most effective arrangement for communication.

*Questioning.* The students can reflect on: (a) the plot ("This is what I saw, is this what you wanted us to see?"); (b) the meaning ("Do you think we were right to try and make the aliens like us?"). (p. 213).

Reflection gives the children a chance to view themselves in relationship to their roles. In this way, they can then modify their behavior and attitudes within the drama and generalize their insights to issues within their own lives. Reflection at the end of the drama allows the teacher and children a chance to come together and evaluate
the drama experience and consolidate their learning (Kukla, 1987).

Stewig (1983) explains that there are four basic components to classroom drama. The components are material, discussion question segment, playing of an idea and evaluation. Material is the first. This is the idea used to motivate the sessions and the stimulus material around which a lesson is built. The material, like all curriculum in a holistic classroom is child directed. This means that the material goes along with the student's interest for a particular theme.

The next component in classroom drama is the discussion question segment. This is not preplanned other than the teacher guiding the session in open-ended questions. The purpose of this segment is to help the student focus on the material and internalize meaning. It usually comes after the material has been presented to motivate students but it can be done simultaneously with the material presentation.

Playing of an idea is the next component. There is no set rule in this component because playing of an idea can be very simple to complex. For example a simple pantomime of one idea is just as acceptable as a complex acting out of the entire story.

The fourth component in classroom drama is evaluation. Stewig puts an emphasizes on this component because it is
the building block for future drama in the classroom. Through this component the students are made to reflect on what they have done considering which aspects they were pleased with and which ones they could have improved upon.

Stimulate the Imagination and Promote Creative Thinking

According to David Booth (1985) story drama is a way to stimulate the child's mind and develop creative thinking. Story drama occurs when the teacher uses the issues, themes, characters, mood, conflict, or spirit of the story as a beginning for dramatic exploration. Story drama frees the teacher and students from the pressure of acting out the whole story or remembering a script. Thus drama may occupy only a few minutes of the teaching schedule and can complement other teaching methods to emphasize particular aspects of the text. Because students are allowed to bring what they know to the drama, it engages their imaginations and they inevitably move closer to the text (Booth, 1985).

In the imaginary situation, children can take risks, be inventive, explore situations, and test solutions with safety. Imagination allows them to test the fire without getting burned (Kukla, 1987).

Imagery, a way to stimulate the imagination, is a strategy used by educators to help low-progress or at-risk readers draw on their background knowledge (Erickson, 1988).
Imagery is a creative drama technique that uses imaginative mental images formed while reading or listening, to develop sensory impressions from a given piece of literature (Richardson, 1993). The way this helps low-progress readers is that students often do not read because they believe that they cannot be successful readers. So, they may manifest a poor self image by avoiding reading tasks, procrastinating, approaching assignments without a sense of purpose, or display little confidence in their ability to comprehend. At-risk students are often caught in the failure cycle and develop inappropriate behaviors to cope with their lack of reading success. By using imagery, comprehension is improved, therefore, the student finds pleasure in reading which in turn develops literacy skills. When using imagery in oral readings the students should close their eyes, relax, and think about what was being said. If written or visual material is used, the student should read the material, or have someone read it to them either by tape or orally, the students close their eyes and think about what was being read. At first this technique won't be followed readily because the low-progress reader will think it is dumb but stick with it, it will work. When using this strategy, it is important to keep in mind there is not one set answer, and all answers are accepted and discussed (Richardson, 1993).
Usova (1993) did research on integrating creative drama for at-risk children in the first grade. He found that the children were motivated and looked forward to coming to class and on a number of occasions were more interested in continuing class activities than in taking breaks or recess. Integrating drama with language arts was indeed an effective approach with at-risk children according to Usova. These children were motivated and excited about reading and writing especially since they were able to be involved in a drama activity associated with the story content or theme.

Putman's (1991) research dealing with drama and emerging readers adds to the foundation that creative drama sparks the interest of children and helps them retain information presented during reading. She presented nonfiction books to young readers, which are usually more difficult because they don't follow a story line or plot. Having students dramatize the information showed effectiveness in helping children digest the text. She found that dramatizations of expository text offered an effective "vicarious avenue" for learning because they capitalize on a format that is natural for children. This dramatization is ideal for providing a memorable context of physical actions to associate with particular words. The goal when reading nonfiction with children is not to fill their heads with fragmented facts, but rather to build their
reservoir of scripts and scenarios for how the world works so they will have a rich supply of event representations which can be connected to new information as it is encountered in later years.

Traditionally, classroom drama is a safe literary activity that involves students in reading or writing scripts. The newer methods that would have the students out of their seats improvising drama can lead to an uncomfortable feeling for teachers. The challenge according to Wright (1985), is to prepare teachers to move beyond the safe lessons of just reading scripts which focuses more on the product rather than the process. Wright (1985), suggest that lesson plans should move to creative improvisation based on structured but flexible situations that have real meaning for the students. He further states that changes must be made so that the imaginary action can happen in real time and space.

Dramatic techniques such as movement and role play help build a physical, emotional, and intellectual identification with the fictitious situation of a story. Meaningful learning therefore occurs because "the moment you feel or do something yourself, you can never forget it" (Dillion, 1985). As a result, speaking and listening, like thought and feeling, grow out of direct experience (Kukla, 1987).
In summary, Eisner (1985) indicates, "teachers who function artistically in the classroom provide a climate that welcomes exploration and risk-taking." (p. 118). The creative drama teacher requires flexibility, ingenuity, personal creativity, and an ability to exploit opportunities as they occur. The teacher must be there as an facilitator to carry out the kind of creative drama teaching that is transformative and dialogic. This kind of teacher needs curiosity, the ability to focus critical reflection, the strength to cope with uneasiness, uncertainty, and unpredictability, and considerable tolerance of ambiguity. "It is in the areas of ambiguity that transformation takes place" (Burke 1969, p.xix).

The creative drama teacher must be prepared to work with processes that move along in steps and stages, each of them representing an interim result that should not be connected with the final solution (O'Neili, 1989).

In reviewing the literature I found support for using creative drama in a reading program. The literature pointed out the value creative drama has as an educational tool based on organized exploration into self-awareness, human behavior, and self-expression using movement, rhythm, verbalization, sound and role playing. The research gave foundation for spontaneous drama to be used in reading programs as a means to draw in low-progress readers. The
research continued to point out that low-progress readers need a way to develop their background knowledge to help children relate characters in stories to their own lives, future imprinting in the children's mind knowledge about their world.
GOALS AND LIMITATIONS

The goal of this project is to provide a resource manual of creative drama strategies for third grade teachers to use for enhancing the reading program for low-progress readers. To meet this goal the manual has been divided into three parts. Each section has its own specific objectives.

The first section deals with the introduction of creative drama into the classroom. The specific outcome of this section is to stimulate the imagination and promote creative thinking through the strategies of pantomime, role playing, and imagery.

The next section will deal with ways to develop critical thinking. The specific outcome of this section will be the development of the student's comprehension skills. The methods used will include puppetry, improvisational drama, and movement.

The third section of the manual will deal with student's self evaluation of their creative drama. The specific outcome of this section will be development of self esteem and an awareness of others. The method used in this section will be video taping performances for visual self observations.

There are three major limitations for this project. The first, deals with the teacher's attitude toward creative drama. This is a major limitation because the creative
drama this manual addresses is process centered not product outcome. The teacher needs to have a willingness to stick with the strategies even if at first it doesn't seem to work. Patience is very important in doing creative drama because it is the process of the activity that is important and the teacher must allow the student to go through that process to see the effectiveness of creative drama. At first the newcomer to using creative drama may see no value to its use because the teacher is not the controller of the outcome. The students are the controllers. This student control doesn't mean there is no structure; it means that the teacher acts as a facilitator to help students understand the guidelines to foster the desired outcome.

The second major limitation deals with audio visual equipment. Because the self evaluation is done through watching video tapes of performances, the teacher will need to have access to a video camera, VCR, and blank tapes. One will have to clear the use of these pieces of equipment before utilizing the third section of this manual. If these pieces of equipment are not available, a tape recorder may be used but will not be as effective in the evaluation because the full effect of the self evaluation comes from watching one's performance. Body movement and language are important items when evaluating a performance.
Another limitation deals with literary materials. It is important to keep in mind that a child's background is the most important resource but to enrich that background the student needs to be exposed to quality literature. A child's imagination is limitless therefore the sources for stimulating that imagination needs to be an abundance of literary materials for the child to pull from. A good way to organize the literary material is by themes. This will require multiply copies of certain pieces. However, due to budgets in school districts the teacher may find having an abundance as well as multiple copies of pieces of literature difficult. One will need to be resourceful to overcome this obstacle. Some options include borrowing books from co-workers or from the local public library, which restricts patrons to a limited number of books for a specified period with some renewal options.

The most important aspect to making this project work is to have a risk free environment to allow creative drama to take its intended course. Good directions and a solid foundation of the expectations are necessary items for creative drama.
APPENDIX:
CREATIVE DRAMA
AS A SOURCE FOR
LITERACY DEVELOPMENT
INTRODUCTION

This manual is meant to be read from the perspective as a manual of insights into the use of creative drama to enhance one's reading program. The intend is for the reader to understand how and when the addressed creative drama techniques can be used. It is not meant to be a set of recipes to be followed word for word, but rather a springing board for one's own implementation. Just like the cook who follows someone's recipe and the item flops so can creative drama techniques if approached from a recipe stance. One must focus on the idea that individuals always bring their own background knowledge to a cooking session which makes their interpretations work for them. The same is true when using creative drama techniques. It is the teacher's own talents and interpretations that fuel the process for the students. Creative drama when approached in a knowledgeable and willing manner can be a powerful force to which literacy places the learner in a variety of situations which generate forms of thought, feelings, and language beyond those usually generated in a typical classroom interaction. The techniques presented in this manual are not meant to be the only techniques in creative drama nor the very best techniques for every individual. The intend of this manual is for the reader to have insight on how this individual
used these technique to develop creative thinking, stimulate and promote critical thinking skills, and reflection.

This manual has three specific sections each focusing on a specific outcome. The reader needs to keep in mind that sections are separated but have commonalties. Some of the techniques build from other techniques and some branch out from others. I have broken down each technique so the reader may have a clearer understanding of the avenues open to students. At the beginning of my school year, not knowing the extent of my students drama background, I begin with techniques of developing creative thinking. Then move into stimulating and promoting critical thinking skills. I intertwine reflection into both of these areas. Keep in mind the teacher is a facilitator through these techniques and not the director.

It is my belief that reading and writing are used best when children are allowed the opportunity to use them in various situations which they perceive as meaningful. The creative drama techniques described in this resource manual can provide those situations that can influence the functions of reading and writing in a meaningful way. As you read this manual keep in mind that this is not set recipes just ingredients to mix as the user sees fit.
STIMULATE THE IMAGINATION AND PROMOTE CREATIVE THINKING

Stimulating a child's imagination and helping them to use creative thinking can be accomplished utilizing creative drama techniques of pantomime, role playing, and imagery.

Pantomime

Pantomime is acting without words. It is the creation of illusions of reality in space with the human body (Kase-Polisini, 1989). It is an art form that fundamentally concerns itself with the communication of experiences (Alberts, 1971). Through language we can describe, imagine, reason, remember, think and above all communicate. In pantomime communicating of experiences are expressed in terms of physical actions. "Pantomime does not exist in reality but exists in imagination to the very limits of reality" (Alberts, 1971). Presentations usually take forms in a soundless stage. Pantomime depends on the audience for its meaning and interpretation as much as the audience depends upon the performers. Pantomime has been described as an illustration of a story. It has been suggested that pantomime is a good starting point for creative drama because it is a simple form of dramatic activity (Kase-Polisini, 1989). Pantomime must progress smoothly and rapidly (Alberts, 1971). It is useful in studying the essential action of a scene as well as the characterization of a scene. By taking away words players of a scene are
made to focus on the meaning and are allowed to discover the true dramatic action (Kase-Polisini, 1989). Pantomime offers an opportunity for players to define space by the way they move without talking. By defining space the player gives the audience a clear definition of where and when an action is taking place. Pantomime is an excellent tool for study of characters in action (Kase-Polisini, 1989). The best way to deal with pantomime is to start out simple then progress.

Alberts suggest beginning with simple concepts. First by looking at an object. Where is it located in its surroundings. Next, he suggests grasping an object with one or both hands. Taking into consideration the dimensions of the object. Next pick up the object taking into consideration the weight of the object. The next consideration should be the objects use. The player should use the object in its primary use to get the idea of how it is used. Once the player has established the physical characteristics of the object the next step is to repeat the steps but without really using the object, just form an illusion of the object. The simplest way is to go through the same motions one did when the object was really being used. This could be termed imitation, which is primarily an exercise in perception, coordination, and artificial characterization. One must remember that pantomime is an
individual art. It is the communication between one individual and another, by movement and gesture, in terms of understanding and experiencing.

Part of pantomime is to use ones body expressively. By watching young children one can see they are good at imitating but they don't always have the control or discipline to express an awareness of how their body functions. So the teacher needs to look at pantomime for young children as a beginning and not the polished form.

Pantomime can be viewed as a fun game to spark the imagination in a child. The teacher must allow children time to observe objects and people and guide children to look at how things work giving children a clearer perceptive of how to pantomime.

I like to begin with animals when I first begin implementing pantomime in my classroom. I have found that this is an easy way to begin using the technique of pantomime because most children have some background knowledge of animals. Because I begin my school year on the theme of land regions and discuss animals that live in those land regions animal pantomiming fits in very nicely. I usually have students work in groups to research animals that live in each land region. To help my students have a full understanding of these animals they not only have to research information about their habitat but also how they
look, move, eat, and sleep. I use this as background knowledge for when I ask them to pantomime their animal moving through a normal day. I do not start this activity without being the first to pantomime an animal. I always show pictures of the animal I am pantomiming so the students can develop connections between my pantomiming and what the animal really looks like. I found showing pictures of the animal before I pantomime helps the students to interpret my pantomime.

Once a foundation has been established on the use of pantomime many other ideas can begin to develop. I use pantomime in science, math, social studies, and language arts.

Role-Playing

According to Shaftel (1982), role playing is a group problem-solving method that enables young people to explore human problems in spontaneous enactments followed by guided discussion. Where as, Van Ments, describes role-play as an educational technique that becomes known as simulation and gaming. He goes on to define role play as asking someone to imagine themselves as another person in a particular situation. They are to act or behave as they feel that person would act.

The idea of role-playing comes from everyday activities. When setting up a role-play the problem is
usually open-ended and no solution is offered to the group. The problem is to be solved through the playing of the problem. The children involved must analyze what is happening and make proposals for possible action that might solve the problem. This is a good avenue to teach children to first feel, then think and finally act. Usually children react, then think and feel later.

The beginning stages of role-playing in the classroom need to start out simple. Many times the low-progress reader is considered an outcast. Through role-playing the teacher can present problems to be solved that can help the low-progress reader fit into the mainstream.

Shaftel (1982), suggests eight essential steps to setting up role playing in the classroom. First is "warming up". This serves two purposes, one to allow the children to get acquainted with the problem at hand and second it arouses awareness of their need to learn ways to deal with the problem. Here the teacher purposes a problem that relates to the children. Example, Mikey is not suppose to go to the corner store but all of his friends are going. This points out that he is stuck in-between what he is suppose to do and what he wants to do. The next step is for the teacher to express the problem in vivid details as to involve the children emotionally. The next step is for the class to chose a role to play out, either Mikey will go to
the store or he will not. The problem story is a good tool to us here. The teacher can read the story and stop just before the dilemma point. The problem story provides a structured situation for children to move very quickly into role-playing.

Second is selecting the participants. It is important to select children who can identify with the role, someone who can feel the part. Shaftel (1982), points out that the teacher should use caution in picking students when other students have volunteered them.

Third is setting the stage. In this stage the role players begin by planning what they are going to do. They don't plan dialogue they just plan a general direction to go. Each players is then reminded as to their role but not what to say, for the best role-playing is completely spontaneous.

Fourth is preparing the audience to participate as observers. The audience needs to be good listeners and realize that their observation are helpful to the role players.

Fifth is the role-playing. Here the players assume the roles to which they have been assigned. Each takes on their roles and respond to one another's speech and actions the way they feel the people they are role-playing would respond.
Sixth is discussing and evaluating. The discussion following an enactment is the most vital part of role playing. Discussion usually occurs without coaxing from the teacher. It is the teacher's job at this point to guide the discussion with stimulating open-ended questions such as, "What is happening?"; or "Could this happen in real life?".

Seventh is further enactments. Shaftel points out that reenactment is the next step because so often in real life people wish for a second chance to solve a dilemma. The value of role playing comes into play here because participants can arrive at a good solution to a human difficulty through as much trial and error as is necessary.

Eighth is sharing experiences and generalizing. Here the children can see connections to other aspects of their lives. Shaftel points out that this is a higher level of role playing and is not always achieved.

Van Ments (1989), suggest that role-playing is best used in history, literature, art, and areas that deal with the way people live and the effect which people have on one another and their environment. Van Ments, indicates that role-playing can be used with a wide range of ages but young children may have difficulty due to lack of life experiences.

In conclusion role-playing is best used when the teacher wants students to experience and to become involved
in the situation they are studying to form their own attitudes toward the situation. The teacher needs to keep in mind that role-playing becomes better the more times it is used. It is like the first time one tries to use a video camera they stumble the first several times until they become comfortable with all the parts. Role-playing works best when there is an attempt to follow a sequence of steps. These steps are summed up as preparation and instruction, dramatic action and discussion, and finally evaluation. Selection of a role-playing problem is left up to the judgment of the teacher. The teacher needs to consider her own goals as well as the needs and limitations of the students. Finally no instructional sequence is complete without some attempt to evaluate its effects.

Implementation of role-play in my classroom has developed from small sessions to much longer sessions. When I first begin role-playing in my classroom I usually begin by giving the class a problem that has developed out of a story we have read. I vary the problem then put the variations on note cards and hand these cards out to students in small groups, asking them to present that situation to the class. I give time for them to develop this but I don't let it linger for a long time. I have students present their situation and solution to the class. A discussion session always follows each of these
presentation. The discussion session is very important to allow for a full understanding of the solution the group chose and ideas for other solutions.

In the beginning student have a difficult time settling into this creative drama technique and I was tempted to abandon the whole notion. But by sticking with it I have found that students develop the technique and begin to take it seriously. The problem solving that comes out of this activity has carried over to other aspects of the classroom. For example when we need to decide on something for the whole class I always have numerous suggestions and someone always has something to say as to why that would work or not work. This is not a bull session but real solution session. Problem solution is a style of writing I address in my classroom and what better way for a child to understand the concept that to act out the situation. By doing the child is imprinting it into their long term memory.

Imagery

Imagery is a process whereby a person can visualize an object, event or situation in his mind. These visual pictures represent photographic records of objects, interactions and impressions of one's external environment. They are often vivid and detailed representations of real-life experiences (Bagley & Hess, 1987). Imagery is a tool for enhancement of creativity.
According to Hampson, Marks, and Richards (1990), imagery is a useful cognitive tool. One cannot always bring reality to children but one could strive to bring mental images. According to research done by Michel Denis and Maryvonne Carfantan as reported in Hampson, Marks, and Richards, students who have imagined the objects attain levels of memorization equal to those who have actually seen the object. Students who formed mental images during the initial presentation did better on tests than subjects who had no recourse to mental imagery.

Broudy (1987) points out that imagination is the image-making function of the mind. Imagination accomplishes this by the idea that the eye is something like a camera, as the picture comes into the lens the brain takes over filing the image into some sort of system. What that system is, is what confuses teachers because each student has their own unique system. When working with low-progress readers I have found that they have a difficult time with their filing system. Therefore helping them make mental images of a story, works to stimulate their imagination and develop creative thinking. Broudy, addresses the idea that when the imagination is stimulated the imagination not only constructs images of actuality but also images of make believe. Broudy, refers to this as one's allusionary base which he indicates as being the term for the stock of
meaning with which a person thinks and feels. He explains
that this base functions in the learning of skills,
concepts, and attitudes. Many low-progress readers have a
very weak allusionary base because they are weak in
language. Creative drama is an avenue to promote language
which in turn develops their allusionary base.

There are three main elements to imagery, according to
Bagley and Hess (1987). The first is a pictorial one or the
visual representation. Once the child has identified with
the visual image they receive a somatic (feeling) experience
in the form of positive or negative feelings (joy, pleasure,
love, excitement, fear, anxiety, happiness, etc.). The
nature and degree of somatic experience is contingent on the
vividness of the image, the content of the image, and the
manner in which the imager associates with the image.

The next element is meaning. Meaning is the degree of
understanding generated by the evoked image. Meaning is
transmitted in the form of a message, thought or idea, a new
emotional feeling (Bagley & Hess, 1987).

Relaxation is a third element of successful imagery.
The child must be in a state of quiet and calmness. If
there is a lot of noise and commotion the child cannot
listen and respond. Their minds need to slow from its
normal, highly active moving state to a degree where they
are capable of deep levels of concentration. Relaxed, the child can experience images more clearly and vividly (Bagley & Hess, 1987).

Getting children to relax is not always an easy task. I have found that the more times I work on relaxation time in my classroom that each time the children move into it more quickly. Relax and concentrate!

I begin the first week of school implementing imagery. My beginning approach is to read a short story to the class. After hearing the entire story I then ask students to put their heads down and close their eyes. At first this is difficult for some students because they find it funny and uncomfortable. I don't give up. By the end of the first trimester of school the students have the technique down and there is no more giggling or silliness.

While the student's heads are down and eyes closed I ask the children in a low relaxed tone to picture in their minds the characters in the story. I don't rush through imagery. I usually count to thirty (to myself) before I give the next oral direction. I always begin my directions with, "I want you to make pictures in your head or mind." After the student has pictured all of the characters I ask them to pick a character they want to be. Any character is fine, hopefully it is one in the story. My next direction is for the students to picture themselves as that character.
at the beginning of the story. As time goes on I refer to the setting of the story.

In the beginning stages of using imagery it is best to use small sections until the students have developed more of an understanding of making pictures in their head. After asking the students to look closely with their minds eye at the character they chose and where that character begins in the story, I ask students to open their eyes and draw what they saw in their minds. After the drawing it is important to allow those students that want to share their drawing to do so. The oral interpretation is vital to developing vivid details. I don't force students to share because for some the thought of the rest of the class knowing what they pictured in their head is scary at first. What I have found is that, imagery when done in a relaxed and non-threatening environment students are anxious to share.

The next imagery session I will read the same story but this time I will have students see the character moving through the events of the story. It is important to begin with a short and meaningful story. One that has an obvious setting and just a few events before getting to the end. In this session I will move through the setting and all of the events. I would have the students draw the character in the setting and then have them draw the events in order as they saw them. I would not suggest how to organize events on
their paper because I want to learn from the child what kind of organizational skills they posses. This gives insight as to where the child is. Organization of thought is an important strategy for children to develop. After going through the cycle of picturing character, setting, and events the next imagery session will be to picture the ending of the story. Again the drawing must follow the session and sharing is important because it allows students to hear and see what others have seen in their minds eye. This gives them exposure to many views rather than just their own.

The next time I use imagery I will read the same book go through the same process but this time instead of having the students draw and share I will ask the students to write what they saw. The low-progress reader will fight this because it is easier for them to draw. So what I ask them to do is to write a sentence telling who they saw. Then a sentence telling what the character had on. I let them draw the character in the setting. By breaking up the task for the low-progress reader they see the small steps, which doesn't overwhelm them. What I have found in using this process it that the low-progress reader wants to write. I stress functional or inventive spelling. What I have observed is that every student can read what they wrote especially when they have a clear picture in their mind.
Now there is always the student you needs attention and wants to share their picture because it is some super hero who kills everyone. These are the students who need imagery the most. They are usually the low-progress reader and by third grade have developed this protective layer of covering up their weakness by doing attention getting acts. The teacher must allow these students to share because they need language and mental picture development. These students have to work through this initial silliness to begin to develop a good sense of the value of imagery. Their need to see and feel is an important beginning for them to develop creativity and comprehension.

I have my students keep their pictures and writing in a three ring note book to be used as a reference for the next time we use imagery, whether it is about a story we read or about an event we experienced (Example: field trip, event at school, assembly, etc.). By keeping these beginning samples of imagery the students are able to see how their minds eye develops into one with more focus, details, and depth. Imagery can be expanded to any story or event the teacher wants to use. The more imagery technique is used, the more vivid the pictures.
DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Developing a child's critical thinking skills is not an easy task especially if the child has difficulty with reading and comprehension. The teachers needs to keep in mind that children learn through experience and experiencing. It is important to understand for a child to become truly literate the child must be able to "think from inside situations" (Heathcote, 1980) and then make connections to other experiences.

The environment needs to permit children to feel comfortable to learn. Also the child cannot always do what the teacher thinks he or she should do, but as the child progresses, their capacities will enlarge. Working with the child from where they are and not where the teacher thinks the child should be is of uttermost importance. The following are three creative drama techniques that are helpful in developing critical thinking skills. They are puppetry, improvisational drama, and movement.

Puppetry

The main emphasis in puppetry should be on the use of the puppet and not on the making of it. Puppetry should be introduced as a performing art not as a craft. To help a child understand puppetry as an art puppets should be experienced first. Children should see adults and other children using puppets before they are asked to make
puppets. Jim Henson's Muppets are a good resource for putting puppets to use.

The value of puppetry is that it leads a child to creative thinking and the use of their imaginations. It not only allows the puppeteer to develop creativity and imagination but it also allows the audiences to develop the same. Puppetry offers the child an avenue of expression without fear of nonacceptance. Puppets don't have to do it right they can make mistakes and no one sees them as being stupid. Puppetry encourages the development of communication skills because the child is required to think out their words carefully so that their ideas will be understood by other. This in turn develops critical listening skills and the ability to think quickly. Attention span is increased because children listen longer to a puppet rather than a person (Jenkins 1980). Puppetry enhances any learning experience by the old Chinese proverb; I hear, but I forget. I see, and I remember. I do, and I understand. Finally puppetry provides opportunities for children to work cooperative and share ideas. Puppetry can be integrated into all subject areas of the curriculum.

Jenkins defines a puppet as a sculptural or pictorial representation that is made to move by the efforts of an operator. This inanimate object is brought to life by a
performer. It is the performer's imagination that is the catalyst for making a puppet come alive with personality.

There are many different kinds of puppets. I have listed several major types that can be used easily in a primary grade classroom.

**String**

This type is commonly thought of as a marionette. Marionettes are controlled above the puppet by the use of many strings. The traditional string puppet can be frustrating to a primary child because of the necessary control of the many strings. I have used the "two string" puppet in my classroom. These allow the puppeteer to move the puppet from side to side. By having fewer strings the child can manage the puppet with less frustration.

**Stick**

These are the simplest of all puppets to manipulate because they are controlled by a single stick. The stick can be a straw, popsicle stick, tag board cut into strips, or even a twig from a tree. The puppet is put on the stick and then manipulated. The image put on the stick is usually on dimensional but can be more sophisticated.

**Shadow**

These puppets are figures that appear on a screen because of the arrangement of light behind them. They are usually flat cutout figures made from cardboard or some
heavy material. They are attached to a stick just like a stick puppet or they may dangle from a stick by means of a string or thread. Shadow puppets have an advantage over other puppets because they can take on more of a deep emotional appeal by changing their shapes and sizes with different light positions. The light source maybe a flashlight, slide projector, or even an overhead projector.

**Hand**

This type of puppet is very common in most classrooms. They are easy to make but not as easy to manipulate because of the mouth and hand movement. They are commonly made out of paper sacks, envelopes, socks, or gloves. Like the stick puppets, hand puppets are usually one dimensional but can be more sophisticated.

**Finger**

There are three types of finger puppets. finger-leg, are moved by two fingers serving as the puppets legs. Finger-cap, is a type of finger puppet that slips over a finger. Finger-face, is a type of finger puppet where the face of the puppet is drawn on the finger itself. This type of puppet is quick and easy to make. Finger puppets work well for individuals to act out stories to themselves or to small groups.
People

This is where the puppet is half person and half puppet. There are two types, bib and sack. Bib is when the performer wears a bib around their neck allowing them to be the puppet but using their own body. Sack is when the performer wears a sack over their heads allowing their upper body to be the puppet and their lower body to move the puppet. I have used both types in my classroom and have found them both effective depending on the activity.

Jenkins suggests that no matter what kind of puppet the teacher utilizes, starting simple is the best way to incorporate puppetry into the classroom. The performer needs to think about all the things a puppet can do other than just wiggling. Jenkins suggests having a large mirror in the classroom for puppeteers to view their manipulations to better understand the movements of puppets.

Praise is an important issue in all of creative drama but especially in puppetry. The teachers needs to look at praise in puppetry as an appreciation of a child's performance. Appreciation is the constructive type of praise that builds self-esteem instead of tearing it down (Jenkins, 1980). Appreciation separates the deed from the doer, the act from the actor. By showing appreciation for the act the evaluation of the performance is left up to the
child. An example would be, "I enjoyed your puppet performances" rather than, "You're a good puppeteer".

Puppets can be made out of any material. Jenkins suggest having a "stuff box". This is a box full of odds and ends. Things that have been discarded like small doll heads, scraps of material, wigs, string, yarn, as well as new items. In the box there should also be basic equipment like scissors, tape, glue, crayons, pipe cleaners, felt pen, and sticks. By having a "stuff box" imaginations are not lost while searching for materials to make that magnificent puppet.

Puppetry is one creative drama technique I utilize continuously throughout the school year. I use it in all curriculum areas. When I first used puppetry I focused on the puppet rather than its use. I am an artistry person and love to create and make things with lots of detail. What I began to see was that I was putting to much emphasis on the product and not enough focus on the value of puppetry for the student's development of language. I worked through this and now have the student read or write what the puppet is going to say and do before the puppet is ever made. This way the student has a good idea and mental picture of the puppet in action. Once that idea and the idea has been worked through on paper then the student is ready to channel that idea through the puppet.
I use puppetry in all curriculum areas. I usually begin with hand puppets and move into more difficult puppets as the school year progresses. I take time for students to develop a sense of how a puppet can move so the student can develop an understanding that puppets have characteristics only if they, the student, gives it to them. The characteristics are more than just the faces, hair, or clothes the creator puts on the puppet. I work to help the student understand that they are in charge of bringing that puppet to life. This does not happen overnight. This process has to have time to develop. At first the students are silly and just move the puppets' mouth. I allow this to just be at the beginning because it is a necessary part in understanding the process of puppetry. I demonstrate how a puppet can come alive in my own storytelling. I have string puppets, large hand puppets, stick puppets and shadow puppets. I have found by showing my comfort with the use of puppetry that students become more comfortable with puppetry. By Springtime my students have settled down and really shown puppetry to be an art form that all levels can participate in.

Improvisational Drama

Improvisational drama is the spontaneous acting out of ideas. This can be done either by pantomime or adding dialogue. By adding dialogue to pantomimed actions, the
drama is referred to as voice improvisation, according to Kase-Polisini (1989). Therefore voice improvisation involves spontaneous creations of scenes or plays using pantomime and dialogue. Voice improvisation is dependent on strong characterization. The actors do not speak except as the characters they are playing. Kase-Polisini (1989), points out that the secret to achieving spontaneous dialogue with children is to make certain that members of the group know who they are, where they are, what time they are in, and what they are doing in that place. Spolin (1987), points out that spontaneity is the moment for personal freedom when we are faced with a reality and see it, explore it and act accordingly.

The first step in using improvisational drama is getting children comfortable with exposure. Spolin, suggests dividing the class into two groups. One group stands on stage while the other becomes the audience. She suggest coaching the groups to look at one another. When every student on stage become uncomfortable with this exercise have the groups change roles. The purpose of this exercise is to allow students to have first hand experience at standing in front of an audience. This exposure helps them to get over the initial uncomfortableness of performing. When a child feels comfortable it frees up the child allowing for spontaneity to occur.
Spolin suggest the next step is sensory awareness. Children need to have an awareness as to what things really look, smell, taste, hear, and feel like because most of the time in improvisational drama they use imaginary or pretend props. By developing a sensory awareness students have a storage chest of experiences to draw from when they have to perform.

Like many of the other creative drama techniques I have addressed in this manual implementing improvisational drama in my classroom began as a silly session. I did not get facial and body details from students or a serious approach until the students had many experiences.

I introduced improvisational drama in game form first. Some beginning games that teach the introduction of improvisation are the mirror game, tug-of-war, or object moving players (Spolin, 1987). I found that these orientation games help students to develop an awareness of themselves as well as objects around them.

The mirror game is when two students face each other and take turns being the leader of movement. One has to follow the other mirroring what the other does. I have found that for my low-progress reader this develops their self-esteem by putting them in a situation where they can lead someone else. As time goes on when the low-progress reader feels comfortable in front of other students the
whole class becomes one and this carries over in the students reading.

Tug-of-War and Object Moving Players are games that develop the student's awareness of things around them. Tug-of-War is doing just that, but with an imagery rope and keeping ones feet in one place. Object Moving Players ask students to pretend that something is trying to move them. I ask them to first see it, then touch it, then push up against it, before it ever moves them. This strengthens the imagination of the children which carries over into writing and reading with more meaning. I find students really getting into these two activities more readily than the mirror game because it is down where you are not facing just one person for a long period of time, like mirroring.

There are many other games to play to develop improvisational drama. I have listed resources at the end of this manual for utilization in your classroom.

Movement

Movement encompasses actions connected to rhyme and rhythm using instruments and chanting. Movement is concerned with helping children to gain control and mastery over their own bodies. Expressive movement is therefore important because it allows the children direct, immediate, spontaneous expression of their intimate feelings. At the same time it allow children to derive pleasure and enjoyment
from being able to express feelings easily and freely. Children need plenty of time to work through their perceptions of the world because they perceive what is pertinent to themselves at a particular time (Lowndes, 1971). It is necessary for children to gain confidence and understanding at their own speed.

Creative movement provides children with the opportunity to express and explore their responses to inner feelings and their reactions to stimuli from outside their immediate environment. I start with using percussion instruments, both natural and man made. Allow each child to respond to his own percussion sound. The more times a child is allowed to move to the music the more coordinate they become.

Movement is something I have found natural to students and helps to develop a student's thinking skills. I usually begin movement in my classroom by using percussion sounds. I simply using clapping asking students to move while I make sounds and to freeze when I stop. I like for children to see themselves in a freeze position or stop in the action as a time for reflection. While the students are stopped I use a mirror for them to see themselves in to get a picture of their expressions facial wise as well as body wise. As the school year moves on so does the elaborateness of the student's movements. I use a variety of musical tapes like
Indian flute, jazz, instrumental, pop, rock, and rap. I do the selecting of the tape depending on what movement or feeling I want the children to experience. As the year gets toward the end I have found that students enjoy presenting stories with music, centered around movement of the characters. What I have also found interesting is they use music other than rap or rock.
SELF EVALUATION OR REFLECTION

One of the most important aspects of learning is to reflect on what one has done to learn where one should go. Self evaluation or reflection in creative drama carries a heavy responsibility because it is the door for future exploration of creative drama.

Visual Self Observation

I have found that video taping a performance allow me the freedom to enjoy the presentation without taking critical notes to be discussed later. The eye of the camera is an objective eye, it sees exactly what went on.

There are two ways to approach visual self observation. First is to have just the performers involved in the performance watch the tape before the whole class gets a turn. This allows for self evaluation before exposure to everyone's evaluation. The second approach should be used after creative drama has been done over and over in a classroom in front of the same students, the private viewing of the tape may not be as necessary due to the confidence that is built up in the students.

If the teacher is not familiar with using video equipment it would be in their best interest to confer with a knowledgeable person or the equipment manual.

I utilize the use of video, for reflection, in all areas of creative drama in my classroom. I have found it to
be most valuable. It frees me up to just enjoy the student's performances and give the students enjoyment of watching themselves after their performance. In the beginning students are embarrassed to watch themselves in front of the class. I have found as the use of video becomes a constant way of life in the classroom, students become more accepting and relaxed with themselves. I find it so valuable that I video tape constantly in my classroom. I use these tapes at conferences to show parents growth as well as showing new students some of the things we will be doing in our school year together.
Conclusion

Out of all areas of this manual I would say that reflection is the meat of my creative drama. It helps students to build their tomorrow's, it gives them a clearer understanding of their own talents and capabilities. I have found it just as important for me to step back and reflect on the student's needs and growth to allow me to feel successful in my own right. If I don't have a sense of success I wouldn't be able to facilitate my children to feel successful. Children need to see me stumble and make mistakes and watch how I work through situation to give them direction, or an example, to pull from when they are ask to find a solution or perform. I have found creative drama to be appealing to children and the more open minded I am at accepting their ideas and thoughts for discussion the more the child feels valued, which allows for their self esteem to shine.

I hope the reader of this manual finds it valuable and has success in trying creative drama in their own classroom. Please be kind to yourself and don't give up before the success is seen. I am constantly learning new ways to approach the learning styles in my own classroom and I am delighted when a fellow colleague seeks new avenues as well.
References


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