1986

A creative dramatics program across the curriculum for kindergarten children

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Abstract

The major purpose of the language arts program in the elementary school is to provide opportunity for children to create meaning. Through language experiences, children in collaboration with supportive teachers can develop understandings of themselves, others, and the world around and can extend their abilities to express their thinking and to interact with others.

A CREATIVE DRAMATICS PROGRAM ACROSS THE CURRICULUM FOR KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

A Research Paper

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

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June 1986

This Research Paper by: Ruth Yoder

Entitled: A Creative Dramatics Program Across the Curriculum For Kindergarten Children

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

6/19/86
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The major purpose of the language arts program in the elementary school is to provide opportunity for children to create meaning. Through language experiences, children in collaboration with supportive teachers can develop understandings of themselves, others, and the world around and can extend their abilities to express their thinking and to interact with others.

An important part of the language arts program for young children is creative dramatics, for it facilitates exploration and discovery through bodily movement and oral language. Heathcote relates that through creative drama experiences, children can comprehend social situations more thoroughly; it provides for rehearsing and experimenting with various human interactions. Wood relates that, "Whereas professional actors must use their abilities to portray other persons, young social actors must use their abilities to learn about other persons so that they can portray themselves in the most successful and rewarding ways" (1976), p. 254). She says that children need to experiment and analyze in order to acquire

a repertoire of language strategies that enable them to live in a meaningful way with characters and scenes they encounter in daily life (p. 255).

Heinig (1977) states that there are several ways in which creative drama helps children develop communication strategies. As children watch each other playing out situations, they can see communication in action. As they play the situations themselves, they can rehearse a given strategy or experiment with a new strategy.

Creative drama is particularly valuable, because through these experiences children can broaden their repertoire of strategies and can rehearse and test in a secure environment. Douglas Barnes says:

> The dramatic encounters and adjustments that constitute normal living become in the end part of us: we become what we are by doing what we do. What classroom drama can add to this normal process is partly a greater range of encounters, partly the freedom to experiment "without paying reality's price", and partly the enrichment offered by works of literature--the opportunity to make the author's voice temporarily our own. (p. 14)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to foster the development of thinking-language abilities of young

children through creative dramatics. Creative drama will be an internal part of the language arts program across the curriculum. The goal of this program is to help the children gain confidence in thinking and expressing their thoughts through speaking which will extend self worth and other aspects of language performance.

The concept of creative dramatics in this study will adhere to the description presented by the Children's Theatre Association of America:

> An improvisational, non-exhibitional, process-centered form of drama, in which participants are guided by a leader to imagine, enact, and reflect upon human experiences. . . . The creative drama process is dynamic. The leader guides the group to explore, develop, express and communicate ideas, concepts and feelings through creative enactment. In creative drama the group improvises action and dialogue appropriate to the content it is exploring, using elements of drama to give form and meaning to the experience. (Behm & Davis, 1978, p. 10)

Significance of the Study

Children's thinking-language experiences in the beginning school years influence later learning. "How students fare, in say tenth or eleventh grade, depends enormously on what they were asked to do in the lower

grades," writes James Moffett (1968, p. 3). If children are asked in early grades to sit at their desk and accept rote language experiences and listen only to the teacher, they will develop the ability to sit and accept, not question or participate. If, on the other hand, they become involved in the language processes and through these processes create meaning, they will not only develop language abilities but an appreciation for the power and beauty of language (McIntyre, 1974).

The transition from play activities to real adult occupations is also gradual (i.e., play hunting to hunting): there is no sharp division between the early exploratory play of childhood and the vocational pursuits of the adult. In our society, schools intercede between the two worlds of the young child and the adult, but they often fail to forge a meaningful link between them. Entering school can be a difficult transition; play activities are often discouraged, while learning by listening or reading rather than acting is encouraged (Brown, 1982, p. 26).

An invaluable approach to education is creative dramatics. It involves maximum participation of the child and is designed to liberate the mind and stimulate imagination. Creative dramatics emphasizes participation; its chief aim is experience (Siks, 1958). The dramatic

process can be an invaluable technique as the teacher works to help children render their own personal experiences into language. Primary children bring a tremendous amount of experience with them to school. Teachers often forget this fact and believe that children's real living begins upon entering the classroom.

> *To develop their language powers, the simple fact* is that children must talk a lot. They must use language and use it an enormous amount. Learning to read and write will depend in large measure on the growth of oral speech. (Moffett, 1968, p. 45)

Procedures

The study will involve the development and implementation of a creative dramatics program for kindergarten children. It will begin in the fall of the year when recordings of oral language will be made from a sample of the children. The program will extend to all subject areas throughout the year when recordings will again be made to see if there has been a significant growth in oral language development. Special notice will be made on length of thought, expression, and classes of different words used.

The literature for this program will be chosen with the assistance of the school librarian Carol Porter.

Additional information will be offered by Gloria Suntkin, who teaches Movement to the kindergarten children.

Most of the students participating in this program reside primarily in a rural community near Fort Dodge, Iowa. They are basically middle class families, and the children have normal thinking-language abilities.

Summary

This paper is organized into four chapters. In Chapter Two pertinent research studies and professional literature will be examined in five areas: values of creative drama in the development of young children, functions of creative drama, types of creative drama, creative dramatics across the curriculum, and development of a creative dramatics program. Chapter Three will develop a creative dramatics program for a kindergarten classroom that will be presented in three sections: introduction to school life, creative dramatics across the curriculum, and responses to the program. A summary and some conclusions will be offered in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of research and professional literature which supports the language growth of young children through creative dramatic experiences. The topics presented are: values of creative drama in the development of young children, functions of creative drama, types of creative drama, creative dramatics across the curriculum, and development of a creative dramatics program.

Values of Creative Drama in the Development of Young Children

Most adults have learned to cope with negative feelings, frequently through a painful and extended process of growth. Children also experience the full range of human emotions, but they often lack the communication abilities, experience, or maturity to deal with them effectively (Necco, Scheidemantal, Wilson, 1982).

Teachers can help children develop strategies to cope more adequately with their emotions and the related behaviors they generate. While teachers cannot be all things to every child, they feel the need to comfort a child in distress, deal with a sensitive

issue, or emphasize a point to an unaccepting child (Necco, Sheidemantal, Wilson, 1982).

Jean Claude Piaget has indicated that each child has a need to forge out of direct experience a mental scheme of the world that has a definite hierarchy of meanings. In a sense this is what the learner proceeds to do when organizing material and behavior, adapting and being adapted as development takes place (Featherstone, 1967). The individual learns through activity and in this way shapes a miniature universe which somehow must be placed in a much larger framework. This gradual development is marked by a great deal of joy and excitement as well as frustration and disappointment, particularly in a young child (Duke, 1974).

Because little children have strong feelings, they need opportunities to release emotions in a positive way. Emotions are strong and close to the surface for most children. Therefore, children need a leader who allows release of the true creative spirit. Children also need a positive response to their behavior to feel secure and important (Siks, 1958).

The vehicle of drama is one way of reaching children and helping them look at themselves and others from a fresh perspective. Teachers function as collaborators

in a very broad, but appropriate sense when they offer children opportunities for personal and social growth through drama (Necco, Scheidemantal, Wilson, 1982).

Children naturally have a need to be active. Young children delight in testing new found physical abilities against challenges from the environment. In creative dramatics the body becomes a medium through which a child creates. Children become aware of the need for disciplined control as they attempt to coordinate body, mind, and emotions in the expression of ideas, actions, and characters (Duke, 1974).

Curiousity is another basic characteristic of the child. Little children revel in their new world, full of mysterious and tantalizing events. They learn to look, listen, see, hear, and feel. Active participation in creative dramatics calls upon these abilities and helps the child become more responsive to their world. As children confront new experiences, they learn the necessity of evaluating and thinking through their reactions. Ultimately through such experiences, social attitudes and appreciations begin to form (Duke, 1974).

Interaction with others presents new challenges and experiences, and group effort becomes an important factor in the life of the child. Creative dramatic activity provides a multitude of opportunities for

interaction and cooperation. Discussions of actions, characterizations, and responses help to develop social awareness and responsibility. The child comes to know what is good and what is bad in portrayal, but also learns through interaction how to respond to others (Slade, 1955).

Hartley, Frand, and Goldenson (1964) relate that "dramatic play helps the child develop from a purely egocentric being into a person capable of sharing and of give and take" (p. 19). Piaget (1926) believes that one crucial factor in the decline of egocentric thought and the onset of role-taking skills is peer-interaction. Creative drama provides opportunities for children to play together, enact ideas together, organize their playing space, and experience a variety of human interactions in their dramatizations (Heinig & Stillwell, 1981).

The child's development of confidence is an important aspect of creative drama, for the student gradually learns to enjoy, rather than fear, the opportunities to stand up and share ideas, opinions, and views. "Children express themselves, after all, for the same reasons that men and women of all ages have expressed themselves: they have something to communicate" (Slade, 1955, p. 58). Each child is

encouraged to express feelings and beliefs either through words or actions or both.

Individuality should constantly be encouraged, recognized, and developed. Students enacting a story or poem deal specifically with egocentricity because differences in understanding arise. Developing a love for the best literary efforts in the English language is an important educational objective, and to be able to interpret these works for the joy and understanding of oneself and others is an extremely valuable skill (McIntyre, 1974, p. 91).

Functions of Creative Drama

Geraldine Siks (1977) states that "drama does come to school with all children, but they don't know or even care that it is called 'drama'" (p. 3). What children care about is the opportunity to express their feelings, thoughts and imaginings in satisfying dramatic experiences.

Dorothy Heathcote (1976) believes that a conscious employment of the elements of drama is to educate--to literally bring out what children already know, but don't yet know they know. She calls this goal "building volume within the student." It is being concerned for quality education as opposed to quantity

(p. 13). She believes that quality experience plummets deep into feeling and meaning.

Brian Way (1970) suggests that opportunities for drama should be provided for every child and should be the concern of every teacher. The aim is to develop people, not drama. He states that "drama is a way of education in the fullest sense, it is a way of living which aids rather than interferes with other study and achievement" (p. 7). Drama is not another subject but a way of helping each person develop. In education, drama is concerned with developing and enriching factors that already exist, different as each factor may be for each individual. Education, he states, is concerned with individuals; drama is concerned with the individuality of individuals; with the uniqueness of individuals (p. 3).

Drama is created spontaneously by the players themselves as an expression of their feelings or an interpretation of the characters in a story. Many students are unwilling or unable to let their feelings show or express their emotions in appropriate ways. Drama can provide an emotional release when it is conducted in an atmosphere that is conducive to and supportive of self-expression. Because of spontaneous performance, children will grow in the process of

problem solving through discovery. They will learn to make decisions and discover different ways to perform. In drama, children will develop self-reliance, self-direction and tolerance while working as a member of a group, as well as working individually within the group.

Drama, throughout the ages, has been an event in which people lose themselves, thus finding their own true selves. Nowhere is this more evident than with children (O'Hanley, 1973, p. 34). To dramatize life and human experience is a natural impulse in children. The impulse to dramatize springs naturally and inevitably from their play. The teacher does not have to implant creative dramatics into the realm of the child but has only to make use of already existing capacity. Children are natural dramatists, actors, designers, singers, and dancers. As a collaborative art, drama allows the child to explore, expand, and utilize these abilities. The child is able to harness and design creative energies to serve the communication of an idea.

The emphasis on process rather than product distinguishes creative dramatics from children's theater. In creative dramatics, every child, regardless of talent, is encouraged freely to try on as many

characters as he/she desires in different situations. Such activity provides experiences of joy and happiness, which often helps children to counteract strong exposures to bitterness, hate, and disappointment. Dramatic activity also demonstrates that even in the midst of poverty and its sufferings, there are transcendent values, such as beauty, joy, creativity, and imagination. Creative dramatics appeals to and sets into action the inner resources of the human person, which are the greatest assets in building a perspective of a world in which positive qualities and experiences exist. When the child is so absorbed, no audience is necessary. The child will face in any direction and move to the magic of the moment undistracted (Pierini, 1971, p. 14).

Perhaps one of the most distinguishing qualities of creative drama, setting it apart from other theater activities, is its inclusiveness. Opportunity is provided for all children to participate, and the premium is on the ability to take an idea and react spontaneously to it. The key word is opportunity, for it is crucial that, even with very young children, creative drama be an opportunity, not a requirement (Stewig, 1973, p. 22).

Types of Creative Drama

Creative drama includes all forms of improvised drama, such as dramatic play, pantomime, story dramatization, and puppet shows.

Dramatic Play

Charlotte Huck (1979) writes that books become more real to children as they identify with the characters through creative drama. Young children begin this identification through dramatic play. A five-year-old engaged in impromptu play may become an airplane zooming to the airport built of blocks; another assumes the role of mother in the playhouse; others take parts of delivery people. Sometimes children of this age will play a very familiar story without adult direction. Dramatic play represents the free response of children as they interpret experience (p. 660).

The joy of discovery in a small child often becomes linked with dramatic play because play is a means of exploration and development as well as being a creation of the moment. Sometimes the energy of the play and the particular moment is interrupted and lost, but the child quickly finds a new experience with whom to continue his/her learning. The essential fragility of discovery through dramatic play offers a good reason for placing emphasis in education on child-centered

activities rather than on spectator or audience roles. Only through secure yet active participation will the child be encouraged to discover alone.

Winifred Ward (1957) describes dramatic play "the play-living in which children try on life by putting themselves in the place of any grownup who catches their interest, to say nothing of all the animals and inanimate objects they are quite likely to become" (p. 2).

Much research has been done by psychologists concerning the meanings and the functions of dramatic play in a child's life. Most of them agree that "in addition to its general utility in relieving tensions and externalizing inner experiences, it helps the child set the boundaries between reality and unreality (Hartley, Frank & Goldenson, 1952).

Sense awareness is based on the spontaneous dramatic play of small children. As Piaget has so carefully pointed out, sensory experience is necessary to all learning in early childhood. It precedes the acquisition of cognitive skills (McIntyre, 1974, p. 8). Brian Way (1967) writes:

> . . . our sensitivity as people, our awareness of ourselves and the world about us, and therefore our own personal enrichments in life

are all partly dependent on developing our sensory instruments to the fullest extent of their powers, different as those powers might be for each individual." (p. 25)

Children are born with all the equipment necessary to explore and learn through their senses--the chief means for developing communicative abilities. These experiences are expanded through ever-widening circles of hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, and tasting. Teachers need to provide time for children to explore the sense world: seeing and touching in a different way; pausing for the delicate odors of morning freshness; becoming absorbed in the unfolding of creativity (Pierini, 1971, p. 52).

Brian Way (1967) discusses a unique method of sense awareness. Just before starting a story, the teacher invites the class to help bring the story to life by making some of the sounds that happen in the story. "Let us try one sound now; in the story I am going to tell you there is, for instance, the sound of the wind. Everybody make the sound of the wind--now" (p. 28). As confidence grows, tentative sounds will become bold so it is wise to have a means of controlling the sound. One control factor, mentioned by Way, is to have a simple arrow which is used in

the same manner as the volume control on a radio or television set. When the arrow is pointing downwards, there is no sound at all; as the arrow begins to turn upwards, sound starts and can go on growing in volume; when it is pointing straight upwards the sound can be at full volume; and as it turns down again, the sound begins to fade away to silence.

Huck (1979) states that dramatic improvisation is very similar to dramatic play in that it is characterized by spontaneous dialogue and action. Improvised drama from a nursery rhyme could be encouraged for young children. Questions should be asked following the improvisation, and some of the answers discussed with the children.

Siks (1958) emphasizes the importance of dramatic play centered around Mother Goose rhymes:

> Mother Goose, not unlike Shakespeare, has proved her worth to the world. For years she has opened the first gateway to literature. Her rhymes, her jingles, her musical bits of poetry and nonsense which have been enjoyed for many generations have come down to us on their own merits of beauty, simplicity, and fitness. (p. 260)

Basic rhythmical movement might also be introduced through Mother Goose rhymes: For example, children could walk to "Tommy Snooks and Bessie Brooks," gallop to "Ride a Cock Horse," jump to "Jack Be Nimble," and run to "Wee Willie Winkie." Nursery rhymes could also motivate dramatic action with such verses as "Hickory Dickory Dock," "Three Blind Mice," and "Jack and Jill" (Huck, 1979, p. 660).

Way (1970) points out that movement has an important function in the dramatic process. He suggests that:

> One of the functions of movement within drama is to help every child and young person achieve complete mastery of his or her physical self, thus enabling an emotional harmony to develop regarding their own bodies, on a basis of full personal confidence and sensitivity. (p. 65)

Pantomime

Pantomime has much to offer in the emerging expressiveness of the student. It is an area of expression which has often been overlooked. Through facial expression and bodily movement, meaning is created without verbal language (Duke, 1974, p. 86). Pantomime activates and stimulates the imagination; helps to reduce feelings of self-consciousness; develops a greater awareness of what body and mind can do working

together; strengthens recall of memory sensations which otherwise might lie dormant; increases the power on concentration and relaxation (Polsky, 1973, p. 37).

Moffit and Wagner (1976) suggest that it is best to begin with activities which all children can perform at the same time and progress to more individualized efforts once children have developed some facility and confidence. Pantomime is a useful form in beginning creative drama, and can be performed by the whole class. Simultaneously the teacher describes what is happening, and the students respond through pantomime. Since all are participants, there is no threat of audience, of being the focus of attention, or of making a mistake. In this way, each child has the opportunity to contribute ideas without the apprehension of being evaluated by others (Feinberg, 1976, p. 184).

Examples of whole-group activities are: walk on pebbles; melt after being an icicle; make a peanut butter sandwich; or make gelatin in a large bowl and then a small one. After a whole class activity, students could share the feelings or ideas felt during the activity. Whole class pantomime paves the way for future sharing of self with others since all have shared in some activity together (Feinberg, 1976).

Once familiar with pantomime, activities can be conducted in groups or pairs. Feinberg (1976) states that working with others requires more cooperation than working alone, and some children might need guidance from the teacher as they begin group pantomime activities. Working with different partners over a period of time provides the groundwork many children need for working with others in small groups. One pair activity could be the mirror game with one person performing the action while the other tries to act as the reflection. Another pair activity is the two-hand lumber saw. Groups might be assigned a pantomime project, such as laying a carpet, washing a car, or painting a room. Pantomime is almost always an essential step in the development of believable creative drama with children.

Jeanne McLain Harms (1982) stresses that experiences with books can be extended to narrative pantomime. In narrative pantomime, all children in a group can respond bodily to the action in the stories (p. 6). In narrative pantomime, the leader narrates for the children to interpret in their own way. There are a number of stories and poems describing interesting and dramatic action that children can easily respond to as the teacher reads them.

Heinig and Stillwell (1981) state that narrative pantomime provides an expedient, efficient, and enjoyable way to dramatize a number of materials. It is a useful activity regardless of the amount of experience the children and the leader have had in creative drama. According to Rubin (1977), narrative pantomime can teach children word order, sensory awareness, and nonverbal communication.

Siks (1958) warns that material must be wisely chosen for narrative pantomime. A leader listens for ideas that interest children, ideas that are dramatic, ideas with hopes, dreams, wonderings, ideas with fun and flavor. The leader is alert for experiences in literature and life that will tug at the hearts and heads of growing children. A good leader also realizes the need for exposing them to good literature rather than expecting mediocrity to motivate them into sharing their best (p. 152).

Beginning experiences should be limited in characterization but strong in emotional conflict and action, according to Siks (1958). Such stories involve children with strong emotional feeling. "Hickory Dickory Dock" is a classic example of beginning conflict for little children. Characterizations are limited to clocks and mice, and emotion is centered on fear

which comes from unexpected noises. Children enjoy playing this conflict over and over (p. 168).

Story Dramatization

Story dramatization generally refers to the process of making an informal play improvisationally from a story. Before improvising a story, children can read the story to themselves or have it read to them by the teacher or a member of the class. Then, working as a whole class or in groups, they discuss the story. Short stories can be played out in one improvisation. For longer stories, the children can improvise scenes in small groups--the groups can enact the whole story. The children who are playing the story are the primary decision makers.

As Chambers (1970) wrote:

> The genesis for the most successful experiences with creative drama is found between the covers of good children's literature. The folktale, incidents from children's novels, short stories for children, etc. all offer real opportunities to engage in this very special kind of creative activity, an activity that can add a special dimension to the realm of children's literature. (p. 53)

Heinig (1977) believes that literature supplies many fascinating examples of communication strategies in action, and bringing those materials to life can be one of the best ways to learn how people deal with such situations. She feels it is important for children to hear these stories, see them played by their classmates, and try out the scenes for themselves, playing as many sides of the story or the characters as possible.

Rubin (1977) states that story dramatization is at the center of creative dramatics. Through their playing, students identify with characters, sharpen listening skills, increase attention span, and improve sequential understanding. Children can expand a story they have read by adding characters or by moving the plot forward or backward in time. In preparing a dramatization, a piece may be read several times, each time seeking greater understanding which will encourage depth of involvement in understanding characters, and the action of the plot.

Huck (1979) believes that very young children will become involved in dramatic play, but they usually do not have the sustained attention to act out a complete story. They may play a part of a favorite folk tale (for example, "The Three Billy Goats Gruff" crossing

the bridge), but they seldom will complete a whole story (p. 662).

Primary-grade children enjoy playing simple stories such as Caps for Sale, by Slobodkina; Ask Mr. Bear, by Flack; or Six Foolish Fishermen, by Elkins. Folktales are also a rich source of dramatization. They are usually short, have plenty of action, a quick plot, and interesting characters. A favorite is Stone Soup by Marcia Brown. Other folktales that children enjoy dramatizing include The Three Wishes by Galdone and "Who Will Wash the Pot?" in the book The Lazies by Ginsburg (Huck, 1979, p. 663).

Regarding dramatic plays, McCaslin (1981) contends that to exclude literary material (myths, fables, legends, folktales, poetry, and short stories), is to deprive children of a rich source of drama. She believes that good literature offers values and absorbing plots that original plays frequently lack. She also says that personal human experience is the essence of drama, and can be used with richly satisfying results. Curricular material, literature, social issues, and personal problems expand the experiences on many levels.

Puppetry

Puppetry is another form of play-making that provides experiences in interpreting literature. Huck (1979) recommends that children "play out" stories prior to using the puppets. Playing the story creatively will allow the child to identify with the characters before becoming involved with the mechanical manipulation of the puppet.

Harms (1982) states that experiences with puppetry can assist students to comprehend elements and features of stories. Through puppetry, students can respond to the emotional elements of stories and can examine their own personal feelings and those of others evoked by the work. Simple folk tales are highly adaptable for students of all ages to use in initial experiences with puppetry. The motifs and themes of ideas are presented simply and clearly. Good overcomes evil, usually through a character's ingenuity. Plot sequences are clearly organized. Examples are patterns of three, full circle, and cause and effect (p. 21).

Many children will "lose themselves" in the characterization of a puppet while hidden behind a puppet stage, although they may hesitate to express ideas and feelings in front of the class. Through puppetry, children learn to project their voices and

develop facility in varying voice quality to portray different characters. A well played puppet show will extend children's appreciation of the stories and make literature a more memorable experience for them (Huck, 1979, p. 667).

The techniques of puppetry are most appropriate for certain stories. Some that would lend themselves to interpretation through puppetry are The Fat Cat (Kent), the "Gingerbread Boy" in Haviland's The Fairytale Treasury, Rosie's Walk (Hutchins), Frederick and Alexander and the Wind-up Mouse (both by Lionni) (Huck, 1979, p. 667-668).

Creative Dramatics Across the Curriculum

Creative dramatics provides exciting and practical experiences for strengthening and interrelating all subject areas. It can foster more comprehensive conceptual understanding from different areas of the curriculum. By using drama as a bridge, children can quickly grasp certain concepts from various areas of the curriculum. Creative drama can reinforce academic subjects, infusing the learning process with excitement and fun as the children verbally and physically play out their new knowledge (Texas Education Agency, 1978).

Creative dramatics need not be considered a special subject area by itself. It can incorporate experiences

from any subject area, whether it be language arts, science, social studies, or the fine arts (Heinig & Stillwell, 1981, p. 6).

One of the most important benefits of incorporating creative drama into the curriculum is the enjoyment and feeling of success children gain from it. Enjoyment and success lead to self-confidence, a prime requisite for becoming a thinking, feeling, and creative person in any environment (Heinig & Stillwell, 1981, p. 13-14).

Language Arts

The comprehension and composition processes--listening, speaking, reading, and writing are involved in creative drama. It motivates children to listen and speak and encourages them to read and write (Ross & Roe, 1977, p. 383).

Listening. Tucker (1971) suggests developing auditory discrimination by using a sound effects record as a stimulus for guessing different sounds. The children respond by making the sounds with their voices or depicting the sounds with their bodies. Siks (1958) believes that children will improve in auditory discrimination through creative dramatic ability such as:

> . . . becoming a train engine that moves fast or slow; a train with a light load or a heavy one;

> a train that has a big or a little engine; a train that whistles with a loud or a soft whistle; a train that is near or far away; a train that is a "diesel, electric or heavy freight." (p. 280)

Children who know they will be dramatizing a story after they hear it will have a good reason for listening carefully to the sequence, dialogue, main ideas and details of the story. They must pay careful attention in order to recreate the story and to interpret the characters as they appeared. They must also listen respectfully to each other in order to communicate sensibly during their improvisation (Ross & Roe, 1977, p. 384).

Speaking. Creative dramatics is effective for developing vocabulary and vocal quality with young children. Blank (1953) met with an experimental group for 30 minutes once a week for dramatic activities, while a control group continued the regular school program. The children were pre-tested and post-tested on the vocabulary subtests of the Metropolitan Readiness Test and the Metropolitan Achievement Tests. To determine improvement in vocal quality, September and May recordings of the children's oral reading were made, and a panel of five judged their articulation

and flexibility of tone. The results of both measures favored the dramatics group.

Oral expression develops naturally and easily in the informal atmosphere provided by creative drama. Children learn to speak spontaneously and fluently because they are internalizing the elements of the story as they retell the sequence of ideas. Smilansky's (1968) study of kindergarten children revealed that increased participation in dramatic play resulted in more verbalization.

Shaw (1968) claims that creative drama should help children to become aware of the ways in which words, inflections, and gesture shape and convey meaning; it should give them an opportunity to develop their abilities in encoding and decoding communications (p. 199).

Creative drama can provide opportunities to learn another dialect. Hays (1970) reports that school children who spoke "pidgin" English learned the intonation pattern and pronunciation of Standard English as a result of participating in a creative drama program. In their studies, Ludwig (1963) and Woolf and Myers (1968) show that creative drama produces greater improvement in articulation than other methods of instruction.

Much of the literature used for creative drama exposes children to new concepts and extends vocabulary. Ward (1957) says that when literature is used to stimulate dramatics, "the children will take hold of as much of the original language as they are able for the sound of it is fascinating to them" (p. 187).

Several excellent examples are included in the captivating book Push Back the Desks by Albert Cullum (1967), an experienced elementary teacher. In describing his work with a group of kindergarten children he writes:

> From my meagre linen closet I sacrificed a good white sheet to make a dramatic entrance into the kindergarten. . . . As a roaming language arts teacher I was able to indulge in such activity. . . . There I was in the middle of the kindergarten covered with my last good sheet, in which two holes had been cut out for my eyes. I saw twenty-two pairs of eyes looking at me. "I am a friendly apparition," I slowly stated. "What's that?" asked five-year-old Tony. They all started to talk at once, of course, so I asked them to sit in a circle, and I sat in the center. I proceeded to whirl about in a flashing dervish manner and explained to

them that for Halloween I was going to be a very friendly apparition. "What do I look like?"

Finally Annette guessed that I was dressed as a ghost. They then took turns wearing the large sheet and . . . flew through the kindergarten air as friendly apparitions. It was simple for them to accept apparition as a good kindergarten word. (p. 60-61)

Children may respond with fervor to words, and build a sensitivity to them, but do these words remain with a child? Cullum feels that they do and he describes the results he received in fostering language growth in kindergarten:

It was exciting to see them go home during the school year as twenty-two eerie apparitions . . . well-trained pachyderms . . . (or) proud, snorting stallions. . . . They carried their big words home to astounded parents, grandparents, and older brothers and sisters. They were proud of their new words. Together we had added sixty new words to their speaking vocabulary.

At the end of the year I devised a test to see how well they had retained their big words. Without any review, over ninety percent of the

class scored one hundred. The words were still alive. (p. 65)

Stewig and Young (1978) studied the effectiveness of creative drama on oral language growth of children. A sample of the student's oral language was taken on a pre-test and post-test basis. Between tests, students were led through a twenty session creative drama unit.

To collect samples of oral language for the pre-test, a short cartoon film without sound was shown. The students were then paired with a kindergarten child to whom they retold the cartoon story while recording it on a cassette recorder. The students were unaware of the purpose of the storytelling and recording. The language samples, gathered before and after the ten week treatment period were transcribed into typescripts. Post-test data were collected in the same way. The twenty creative drama sessions emphasized verbal fluency through various improvisation and dramatization experiences.

The students' pre-test and post-test oral language was analyzed according to Loban's and Hunt's four measures of language growth:

1. Total verbal output, or the number of words used in the entire language sample;

2. total T-unit output, which Hunt identifies as one main clause with all the subordinate clauses attached;

3. total clause output, which records all the main clauses and subordinated clauses in a sample, and;

4. type-token ratio, which measures vocabulary diversity.

In comparing the means of the pre-test and post-test for both groups of children, there was a significant difference in language growth in total verbal output, total T-unit output, and total clause output in favor of the treatment group. No significant difference was shown in the fourth measure. The significant increase in the first three measures seem to suggest a relationship between creative drama experience and oral language growth in this class.

McKee and Stewig (1980) replicated the Stewig and Young (1978) study. Some modifications were made in the design and procedure for this study. To collect samples of oral language for the pre-test, a popular story was read to the students which they each retold to a kindergarten student while it was being recorded. Twenty creative drama lessons were experienced over a period of four weeks. None of the students were

told the purpose of the testing. Following the twenty lessons, another story was read to the students and once again they were paired with a kindergarten child to retell the story while taping their oral language. Both the pre-test and the post-test were transcribed into typescript.

The data was analyzed in the same manner as the Stewig and Young study. A significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores was noticed in all four of the oral language measures, which would signify that there is a relationship between creative drama and oral language growth.

Reading. Reading abilities are developed through creative drama in a variety of ways. Children increase their vocabularies from interactions with their environments (Ross & Roe, 1977, p. 384).

Borden (1970) reported an activity designed to turn action words into sight words. She wrote the name of a child on the board along with an action word in this manner: "Jack, jump!" The child named would be expected to perform the action. Borden found this approach to be successful with children who were unable to recognize any other words. By acting out such descriptive words as wicked, starving, or greedy from stories they read (or listen to), children are

clarifying the meanings of words. At the same time they may work on expanding their vocabularies by thinking of words that mean the same as the words they are portraying. Children may suggest bad and evil as synonyms for wicked.

Ross and Roe (1977) suggest that children have fun learning the meanings of antonyms by playing "Opposites." The teacher has word cards containing pairs of antonyms. Two children come to the teacher and each takes one card from a set of antonyms. They dramatize their words in turn, and their classmates guess what the word pair is. When a correct answer is given, the cards are held up by the actors for the class to see, and another pair of children choose words.

Vocabulary can be developed through "Magic Modifiers," in which the students portray their concepts of a greedy giant, a dejected giant, and an angry giant, as well as the ideas of eating delicately and eating voraciously. Another game which can help build vocabulary is "Varied Verbs." In it, the children act out verbs which are close in meaning but have slightly different connotations: walked, sauntered, shuffled, strode, and others. Children learn how suffixes can change the meanings of words as they

pretend to be sleepy or sleeping (Ross & Roe, 1977, p. 385).

Role playing improves reading readiness. Yawkey (1980) used it with 96 five-year-old children, randomly assigned to two experimental and two control classrooms. The experimental groups did a number of role playing activities, while the control groups did cut and paste activities. The result on the Gates-MacGinitie Readiness Test favored the experimental groups. Yawkey concluded that role playing encouraged the children to feel, act and think like the characters they played, which facilitated their understanding of story content and concepts.

Dramatics may be better than discussion and drawing for developing young children's story comprehension. Galde and Pellegrini (1982) found this in a study of 108 children from kindergarten, first and second grades. The story, "Little Red Cap," was read to groups of four children from the same grades, two boys and two girls. At the end of the story, the children engaged in play, discussion or drawing. Following each activity, all children took a ten-item criterion referenced test. Overall, the play group scored significantly higher than the discussion or

drawing groups on remembering, understanding, solving, and analyzing questions.

Siks (1958) suggests that teachers can check reading comprehension by having them act out the answers to questions about the story or encouraging them to become characters from the story. Children show their awareness of story sequence, their knowledge of details, their understanding of the characters, and the sensitivity to the mood of the story by the way they play their parts.

Reading abilities can be developed by having the children read a story up to a certain point and then act out the way they think it will end, or change a part of the story in their dramatizing. If children can do these tasks successfully, they are able to read "beyond the lines" (Ross & Roe, 1977, p. 387).

The reading achievement resulting from a dramatization program has exceeded that from a basal reader method (Carlton & Moore, 1966). The subjects were first- to fourth-grade children who were considered culturally disadvantaged. Children in the dramatics group selected their own stories and read them in small groups before acting them out. After a short discussion, each small group dramatized its story for the rest of the class. At the end of the school year,

the student's progress in the program was measured by the Gray-Votaw-Rogers Achievement Test. The results indicated higher mean reading gain scores and changes in self-concept in the dramatics group than in the basal group in all grades.

Writing. Drama activities can support creative writing experiences either as part of the sensory input used to enhance perception and to create a need for self-expression or as children share their responses, thus experiencing each other's solutions vicariously (Furner, 1974).

Dorothy Heathcote (1976) is committed to developing a child's written style. She wants her classes to always come to a drama with pencils and paper handy. Often when she stops the drama for reflection, she asks the children to take the drama to paper, in order to write out what they are feeling and thinking. Heathcote never asks a class to write anything that is meaningless and is simply a test which the teacher can use in judging the children. The records the children write are shared with the rest of the class or with other classes, are mounted and preserved, or are collected into books for class reference. What Heathcote gives children is not information on how to write, but a reason for writing. Writing is never

"assigned," rather, it comes forth when students have something they simply must say, when their emotional drive to express what they have just discovered plunges them into figuring out for themselves a way to say it (p. 195).

Pantomime and improvisation can spark children's imagination and promote positive group interaction, which can lead to written expression. After Azemove (1973) presented "freeing up" techniques (individual and group pantomime, improvisation, etc.) to second- and third-grade children, she asked if they would go mountain climbing with her. Through pantomime they dressed for the trip, put on the back packs, tied themselves in line with a rope, and left the hillside cabin (classroom). Their adventure continued with varied events and experiences. The students were then asked to write up the experience while the memory and excitement was still fresh. The children needed no prompting; their adventure was motivation enough.

Azemove suggests that there are innumerable kinds of trips, such as a day at the beach, a moon flight, or a trip to an amusement park in which a class can participate either within the classroom or inside and outside the school building. "Group think" generates the most satisfying ideas (p. 37). Goodrich

(1971) suggests that sometimes the teacher can use a piece of the children's writing to initiate drama. Children benefit by transforming their own stories into a play involving themselves and other classmates. The use of voice and self can add to a child's vision, thus providing something to say and to explore further in writing (Yawkey & Aronin, 1974, p. 43).

Social Studies

Creative dramatics offers firsthand experience in social development. Dramatic play and pantomime offer opportunities for developing insight into home and community life. These experiences can lead to discussions about different members of their families, for instance. Children can improvise jobs, stressing who, where, and what (Heinig & Stillwell, 1981).

Way (1970) suggests that the achievement of skill in all human activities is dependent on practice. Skill at living is equally dependent on practice. According to Way, a basic definition of drama is simply "to practice living" (p. 6). Through creative drama, children can pretend to be real and imagined people or things which are interesting and significant. They can experiment with societal roles, and in the process, identify and empathize with others, learn

of their concerns, confront their problems, and experience their successes as well as failures.

Through drama, children can begin to establish a tangible relationship with the human condition. What is it like to experience discrimination of any kind? What is it like to hold a particular political or religious view? What is it like to be a member of another culture or another nation? Through drama, children can discover the common bond of humanness that transcends time, age and geographical boundaries (Heinig & Stillwell, 1981, p. 9).

Science

Sensory awareness is central to drama, as it is to all learning. Basic knowledge of the world is derived from sensory experiences with it. These experiences offer children opportunities to observe, compare, and discriminate and as a result, to form concepts about the nature of humanness and the world. It also strengthens the imagination and ability to experience all aspects of being with greater clarity (Duke, 1974).

Young children can explore the senses in many ways through creative drama. Examples of sensory pantomime are:

1. Taste - eat a long hot dog sticking out of a bun filled with mustard and pickles.

2. Touch - handle a block of wood and pass it on as if it were a baby.

3. Hear - use the body to express what is first recalled after hearing a music box playing.

4. Smell - use the body to express what is first recalled after smelling a rose.

5. See - visualize the ocean and then improvise it using the whole body (Pierini, 1979, p. 60-61).

Creative dramatic experiences focusing on seasonal activities can heighten children's awareness. Many activities can extend from this, such as asking students what they would see, hear, touch, taste, or smell in the fall. Fall work activities could also be pantomimed, such as raking leaves. Children can improvise the way animals prepare for winter, in particular squirrels, birds, and bears. These improvisations can extend to every season and every holiday. There are numerous stories and poems to be used in conjunction with these activities (Philadelphia School Board of Education, 1974).

Siks (1958) states that young children live close to their environment. Their interests center around the real world in which they live. Animals always

interest them. Children are interested in the way animals move about, the different things animals do, and in the unusual sounds animals make.

Stewig (1973) gives us an example in this interest while working with a group of kindergarten children. He used Grace Hallock's poem from the book The Reading of Poetry (Allyn, Bacon, 1963) entitled "Snakes and Snails."

Snakes and Snails

Through the grasses tall and slim
All about the water's rim,
Lie the slimy secret trails
Of the water-snakes and snails.

Listening to the poem, the class moved through the mind-created swamp grasses as threatening snakes. The children were then ready to progress beyond simple movement to more complex characterizations, so questions were asked and discussion followed. Because of this experience, the children learned many new things about snakes.

Mathematics

Creative dramatics has a definite place in the mathematics curriculum. The emphasis in mathematics today is on developing an understanding of the various interrelationships among quantitative ideas. It is important for students to feel that mathematics is

vibrant, interesting, and exciting (Philadelphia School Board of Education, 1974, p. 105).

Acting out a situation helps a youngster to develop insights in a pleasurable way. When a child pretends to be making a purchase or selling something to a customer, computation with money takes on meaning (Philadelphia School Board of Education, 1974, p. 105).

Children can dramatize in pantomime an arithmetic problem. For instance, a class could be divided into small groups of various sizes. Each group would receive a problem card. The groups have five minutes to plan an improvisation based on their problem. The audience discusses the improvisation and decides what the number problem is (Philadelphia School Board of Education, 1974, p. 107).

Spacial understanding can be reinforced through creative drama experiences. Boxes of different sizes might be shown to the students and then the contents can be discussed. Another related activity is to present a box with air holes and ask the children what might be housed in it. Children could pantomime their answers (Philadelphia School Board of Education, 1974). Other interesting creative dramatic activities which can develop spacial relationships are enacting the movement of an automobile being driven over a smooth

and rock road, or a fish swimming sideward and around in a bowl while a cat watches outside, or climbing up and down imaginary stairs (Pierini, 1971).

Development of a Creative Dramatics Program

The requirements of creative dramatics are few. It is a natural part of childhood which can easily and successfully be employed by teachers of elementary school students (Chambers, 1970). There are areas of consideration, however, when developing such a program. These important areas are the role of the leader, classroom environment, and a set of goals.

Role of the Leader

Heathcote (1976) states that there is no clear, clean beginning point to using drama as a strategy, only what she calls "edging in" (p. 36). She frequently reassures teachers that "you have to start from where you are and wherever you are is all right" (p. 36). The important thing, she states, is that the teacher is ready to try.

Way (1967) relates that a starting point should lead directly out of a literature experience. The story session, either reading aloud or storytelling, is the most comfortable way of easing into the beginning of drama.

Feingold (1976) states that a building process is needed with beginning creative drama. She believes that this process should focus on reinforcing a positive self-image in each child, and then move toward more group interaction, understanding, and cooperation.

Heathcote (1976) states that for too long the emphasis has been on educating drama specialists, which is a process that has widened the gap between what these specially trained persons do with groups of children and what ordinary teachers do. The time has come to show all teachers how drama can be used to achieve something that cannot be attained as effectively in any other way (p. 15).

Drama is not something special, but rather a technique most ordinary people regularly employ as a way of coping with new or unsettling experiences. It is possible to even project a future event and act it out in the mind or sometimes even talk out loud or move through the experience to help come to terms with it. This dramatic act helps explore the emotion of an experience and thus decrease the anxiety and increase control over it (Heathcote, p. 16).

Heathcote (1983) states that she likes the notion of teacher and child as collaborators. She does not like the notion of teacher as holder of power over

children. A teacher should relate all of the known knowledge to the students as quickly as possible and then spend the rest of the time using that knowledge to explore together to learn new things. Children should find themselves doing a wide range of activities in the classroom to induct different knowledge. She likes the idea of very rigorous work where the teacher gets tired as well as the children. Too often children spend years in school listening instead of engaging in a variety of doing, such as processing things, or helping students argue about tangible things, or having them teach other children (p. 699).

Stewig (1973) stresses that creative drama is on-going. The drama leader does have a purpose in mind for each session with the emphasis on the process and not on the product. If a particular purpose is not accomplished in one session, it may be accomplished in a later session. Emphasis is on the children being involved in expressing their reaction to a stimulus material, not on presenting something finished for an audience.

The teacher's role in creative dramatics is to initiate, guide, watch, and listen. With positive intervention, directed to the role or character (not the real child) the leader establishes contact between

players. The teacher questions, suggests, and directs in doing so. For example, to facilitate a play about Little Red Cap, the leader would direct a suggestion to the wolf or Red Cap, rather than the child's name. The teacher can also participate as a player. With teacher participation, children fall in with the spirit of the play more easily. She can then step out of the play and interview from the outside when necessary (Smilansky, 1971).

Heinig and Stillwell (1981) feel that one of the most important strategies for the leader of creative drama is side-coaching. Side-coaching is the encouraging and descriptive commentary the leader gives as the children play their own ideas. Side-coaching is in many ways very similar to narrative pantomime (p. 47).

Even though teachers may encourage students to use their own initiative, they still have to know how to help children see the possibilities in a situation. Brian Way in Development Through Drama makes this point clearly:

> It is important to remember that in the early stages of all creative work the participants experience a kind of fear of freedom, which can be a total uncertainty as to what to do; ideas either don't come or are self-rejected and

> inadequate; there is a need for someone to give a start. In the realm of ideas on what to do and, later on, who to be, each member of the class is fully dependent for all the beginning stages. (p. 26)

The questions to ask and the ideas to throw into the discussions can be vital to the development of creative activity. Some of the best work with children in creative dramatics is done by the classroom teacher who really understands what the children are doing; yet strangely enough, a teacher may have little formal knowledge of drama and still make the process work (Duke, 1974, p. 74).

Although children should be encouraged to volunteer for individual roles, the teacher needs to be sensitive to the choices made. Roles should not be selected beyond emotional readiness. Characteristics such as the student's ability to communicate and willingness to participate must be considered. Sometimes child performers may feel more comfortable if they can present their characters behind simple masks. Masks made from cardboard can be easily constructed to represent animal characters or fantasy characters such as monsters, witches, ghosts, and fairies.

The good teacher stimulates and inspires, respecting all honest efforts and making sure that learning takes place. A good leader does not order, test, or pass judgment on young players as to the right or wrong way to perform. Pressures for perfection and rote memorization of movement and lines are avoided. The featuring of a few at the expense of others is also avoided (McCaslin, 1981).

Classroom Environment

A classroom environment in which security, understanding, and mutual respect is fostered facilitates creative dramatic activity. Camplo (1974) states that a major responsibility of the teacher is to develop and maintain such a classroom. The climate should be relaxed, safe, and flexible, and should permit experimentation and allow for mistakes. The classroom is an important part of a child's culture, and should foster creativity to the extent that it tolerates and permits freedom within the individual and environment. Real creativity and real learning come from an orderly environment in which children are purposefully engaged in an activity rather than in disconnected, erratic behavior. Students should know there are limitations to which the teacher expects them to adhere.

McCaslin (1981) is convinced that creative drama within the classroom is better than public performance for children of elementary school-age. Preparing plays for public performance has limited value for developing language and thinking abilities because repeated enactments of the same script increases comprehension very little. It is better to improvise many stories than to prepare one story for public performance. Young children enjoy the process of creating, and only occasionally wish to share their work with outsiders. The most natural audience for children is a group of other children about their own age. Outside audiences should be composed of students from other classes rather than strangers, and such occasions should be rare.

A common misconception about the relationship of space to the successfulness of creative dramatics is that children have more ideas if they have more space. Some teachers rationalize that the children need space to express their ideas. This results in the false conclusion that the more space the children have the more ideas they will have and the better they will express them. If the stimulus for ideas is inadequate or the guidance of ideas is lacking,

no amount of space is going to work the magic (Heinig & Stillwell, 1974, p. 71).

Space can actually become overpowering, inhibiting, and unmanageable. If children have no idea of how they will use the space given to them, they can become uneasy about it. Heinig and Stillwell (1974) believe that the classroom provides sufficient space.

Way (1967) states that a stage does not encourage creative dramatics. This environment has an immediate awareness of "out there"--a single direction of playing. He says that much of children's drama experience is best attempted in a classroom. The less space the easier it is for the teacher to have full class control. In the early stages children are afraid of too much space.

Way suggests that desks can be arranged to suggest the setting, such as "over" and "under." If the desks are moved there will be a playing area in the center of the room. When children make their own improvisations, they behave with the full logicality of ordinary movement relationship and they do not play outwards in one direction (p. 272-273).

A creative dramatics session should always end quietly to relax the students. Most important a brief period of calm provides time for the pupils to reflect

on the ideas, feelings, and experiences of the just-completed drama session (Texas Education Agency, 1978).

Oral evaluations of children's play should encourage them to view their responses objectively and to strive for excellence. With teacher support, the evaluation session can be a very valuable learning situation. It can be a time when pupils learn that effective evaluation is a positive activity so that the drama experience is made stronger.

Goals

Feinberg (1976) offers these goals for a creative dramatics program:

1. The students will develop the art of communication.

2. The activities will help the children to listen, observe, and react to attempted communication.

3. Children will be given an opportunity to grow in group understanding, consideration, and cooperation.

4. Imagination and quick thinking will be fostered in real and contrived situations.

5. Healthy emotional and physical release will be provided for.

6. Self-confidence will be developed with and in front of groups of children.

7. A positive way will be provided for children who need attention to get it.

8. Children's writing will be more meaningful by providing opportunities for sharing it through acting out.

9. The program will serve as a tool for the correlation of subject areas with the language arts.

10. The program will aid the teacher in the understanding of individual children, peer group relations, and the total interaction of the class (p. 187).

CHAPTER 3

A CREATIVE DRAMATICS PROGRAM

This chapter will present a creative dramatics program for a kindergarten classroom. The program will be presented in three sections: introduction to school life, creative dramatics across the curriculum, and responses to the program.

It is the writer's aim to strive to make teachers aware of methods and processes through which children may learn to grow and develop. Techniques, activities, and suggestions are included for all subject areas and participation by both teacher and children are encouraged. It is important that all children be given the opportunity to be participants, not just spectators, in order to grow healthy, both mentally and emotionally. A Norwegian teacher, speaking in the language of a fisherman has said, "If you give a boy a fish, you sustain him for a day; if you TEACH a boy to fish, you sustain him for a lifetime" (The School District of Philadelphia, 1974, p. 6).

Introduction to School Life

Young children need many firsthand experiences that give them the opportunities to learn. Children learn about things from handling, smelling, hearing, tasting, and exploring. Children need to be with other

children in order to learn social roles--the give and take that comes from doing things with others. Children need to learn about themselves as human beings; what they can do and cannot do. Much of this learning takes place through exploration, investigation, and play experiences through the guidance of a skillful teacher (Lindberg, Moffitt, p. 58-59).

Five-year-olds are eager, curious, and alert to the things that surround them. A good program attempts to provide for interests and to challenge curiousity, but it cannot force children beyond their point where high interest can be maintained. If children are pushed beyond certain stages before they are ready, development is arrested (Lindberg, Moffitt, p. 59-60).

Kindergarten is not a place where children are taught to constantly sit still. Movement and thinking are closely allied in young children. Kindergarten children think more clearly if they actually roleplay what they are thinking about (Lindberg, Moffitt, p. 62).

Five-year-olds are making a transition from home to school. They need direct relationship to an adult. The approach with young children should always be friendly, informal and imaginative. A simple beginning can be made with stories and drama in finger play

(Goodridge, 1971). Finger plays have been a part of children's literature for years.

Fingerplays. Very often children will pay attention to the movement of fingers and arms before they will pay attention to what is being said. When they become interested in finger play, they are consciously or unconsciously making an association between speech and motion. Finger play gives children an opportunity to communicate before they are ready to carry on conversation (Carlson, p. 15-16).

When children listen to a verse, they are listening to a little story. When they move their fingers, hands, or arms as directed, they are helping to tell the story by acting it out. Finger play can help children develop in other ways. Their ears pick up the rhyme of the verse, a help in learning to distinguish and identify sounds and a very valuable aid in speech development (Carlson, p. 16).

Many finger plays help develop the meaning of abstract concepts as hands go up and down, in and out, and open and shut. When doing finger plays, children use small muscles which might otherwise be neglected. All finger plays have a definite beat and a sense of rhythm which aids body coordination (Carlson, p. 16).

"Finger Family" is a good finger play to start with:

Tommy Thumb
Tommy Thumb
Where are you?
Here I am, here I am,
How do you do?

(each finger in turn)

Peter Pointer
Toby Tall
Ruby Ring
Baby Finger
Finger Family - here we are!

"Grandma's Glasses," "I'm a Little Teapot," and "Here Is The Beehive," are also favorites at the beginning of the year. Young children delight to "Here Is A Bunny."

Here is a bunny with ears so funny,
And here is his hole in the ground.
When a noise he hears, he pricks up his ears,
And he jumps in his hole in the ground.

"Five Little Squirrels" is another finger play that is good to use in the fall and can also be used with puppets.

Five little squirrels
Sitting in a tree.
The first one said,
"What's that I see?"
The second one said,
"I see a gun!"
The third one said,
"Let's run, Let's run!"
The fourth one said,
"Let's hide in the shade."

The fifth one said,
"I'm not afraid."
Then bang went the gun,
And away they did run!

Nursery Rhymes. Nursery rhymes are an excellent source for motivating dramatic activity early in the year. The entire class can participate in an activity such as "Jack Be Nimble," using imaginary candle sticks. Kindergarten children are not hesitant to participate in whole group activities. "Hickory Dickory Dock" can also be done as a group.

Students can break into pairs to dramatize "Little Miss Muffet," "Mary Had a Little Lamb," "Old Mother Hubbard," and "Jack and Jill." Simple props can add to the drama, such as using an empty pail for Jack or Jill to carry.

Sequencing lessons can be easily learned by dramatizing "Humpty Dumpty" and "There Was an Old Woman." One student can play the part of Humpty Dumpty or the old woman, and the remaining class participates as the king's horses and king's men or the old woman's children. Following the dramatization, the class can discuss what happened first, next, and last. Pictures can then be drawn showing the sequence of the story.

Sensory Awareness Activities. Color is one of the elements first studied in kindergarten. Aside

from color recognition, children need to become sensitive to color and the beauty it adds to the world. Children are capable of exploring and learning through the senses which provide the basic mode for developing communication skills. These experiences can be expanded to include all of the senses. The use of poetry as stimulation for the senses is recommended. Christina Rosetti's poem about color is a perfect example:

> What is pink? A rose is pink
> By the fountain's brink.
> What is red? A poppy's red
> In its barley bed.
> What is blue? The sky is blue
> Where the clouds float thro:
> What is white? A swan is white
> Sailing in the light.
>
> What is yellow? Pears are yellow,
> Rich and ripe and mellow.
> What is green? The grass is green,
> With small flowers between.
> What is violet? Clouds are violet,
> In the summer twilight.
> What is orange? Why, an orange,
> Just an orange! (Ward, p. 43)

Kindergarten children will want to be clouds floating through the sky; swans sailing in the light; or small flowers between the grasses.

Hailstones and Halibut Bones, by Mary O'Neill, contains poetry that presents adventures in color. Children become excited to "hear" a new color each day. After listening to the color, students think of more things that that color of the day reminds

them of. One student thought of fire for red, so the writer asked the class how it would feel and how it would sound. When the color blue was discussed, the class thought of sky and water, so they became airplanes, birds, and then fish. Lips were smacked while pretending to eat chocolate for the color brown, but sour faces were made for "tasting" yellow lemons.

Narrative Pantomime. Narrative pantomime can be done to Harold and the Purple Crayon, by Crockett Johnson. Little Blue and Little Yellow, by Leo Lionni, is another story that can fit in nicely with the study of color. It could also be done with narrative pantomime and would be good to use at the beginning of the year as it stresses friendship and playing together.

Children love Blueberries for Sal, by Robert McCloskey. After listening to the story, students can choose their favorite part and dramatize it. School Bus, by Donald Crews, brings out the color of yellow and is an excellent beginning of the year book. Discussion on how to behave on the bus can lead to lining up chairs and "riding a bus."

Movement Activities. Movement is a basic means of expression. Children use their bodies to express themselves. Faces of children at play are animated and their bodies are full of life (Rowen, p. 1).

A simple way to get started with movement is to play lively music and let the children dance. Rhythm instruments provide another way to begin movement. A good way to start a beginner group is to have them walk in a circle keeping time with a drumbeat. When the beat is fast, the children move quickly; as it slows down, the children adjust their tempo (Rowen, p. 1). Skipping, marching, galloping, and hopping can also be done.

Parade, by Donald Crews, is a very good selection for the teacher to share with her class. The students can then march to appropriate music. The children can also become horses and move up and down to kaleidoscope music after listening to the story Carousel, by Crews.

The wonderful imagination with which little children are endowed dies out or becomes dormant unless it is exercised. Like the muscles it must have exercise if the individual is to become a creative thinker (Ward, p. 6).

Creative Dramatics Across the Curriculum

Drama means doing, and when it is integrated into the curriculum, it can provide ways to involve children in experiences that foster understanding (Cottrell, p. 175). The succeeding sections are

examples and suggestions of ways to develop creative dramatics into subject areas and are most relevant when integrated into curriculum. The areas covered are: language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics.

Language Arts

Any practice that enables children to use language or to understand themselves better is an effective approach to teaching the language arts. Creative dramatics can help children understand that humans extend comprehension abilities through other means than through words alone. As they learn the language of gesture, facial expression, intonation, and other bodily means, they begin to understand that the nonverbal aspects of language are also important. When children act out words, they increase their vocabularies. As they act out stories, they learn comprehension as well as an appreciation for good literature. As they listen to others, they learn auditory discrimination and gain practice in the listening skills. As children act out words, ideas, and stories, they gain confidence in speaking which leads to increased competence in reading and writing (The School District of Philadelphia, 1974, p. 87).

Folk tales are a rich source of dramatization. They are usually short, have plenty of action, a quick plot, and interesting characters. They are frequently humorous and almost always end happily. The good and the just are eventually rewarded, while the evil are punished. Wishes come true, but usually not without the fulfillment of a task or trial (Huck, p. 159).

Beyond the function of entertainment, folk tales can kindle imagination. Children can imagine what might have been or what might be. Drama can become significant when responding to these imaginations.

Interesting language is developed from folklore. Children who have the opportunity to hear or read folk tales cannot help but extend the meaning of language (Huck, p. 160).

The following group of folk tales are appropriate to use with kindergarten children. The stories can be read or told to the children first and then discussed. Children have no problem in deciding what their favorite part is and then informally acting it out. Following the dramatization, ideas can be shared suggesting different possible endings to the story, etc.

Galdone, Paul, Puss in Boots

Galdone, Paul, Cinderella

Galdone, Paul, The Gingerbread Boy

Galdone, Paul, The Three Little Pigs

The Grimm Brothers, Sleeping Beauty

The Grimm Brothers, Snow White,
illustrated by Susan Jeffers

The Grimm Brothers, Hansel and Gretel,
illustrated by Susan Jeffers

Hyman, Trina Schart, Little Red Riding Hood

Tarcov, Edith, Rumpelstiltskin

Ash, Jutta, Rapunzel

Sawyer, Ruth, Journey Cake, Ho!

Brown, Marcia, The Bun

Brown, Marcia, Three Billy Goats Gruff

Puppets also work nicely with many folk tales. Students are able to recall the sequence of the story when using puppets to dramatize. Children can use their imagination when making their puppets, often with sticks or paper bags.

Petunia, by Roger Duvoisin, is one of the first books the writer used with kindergarten children because it expounds the importance of what is between the covers of a book. After the writer shared this story with the children, they became animals and

found a box that they thought said "candy" just as the animals in the story had done. The box actually was labeled "firecrackers" so when the animals began to tear the box open it exploded, and they were all injured. Petunia decided she had better learn to read and not just carry a book around. After dramatizing this part of the story, the children then drew pictures of various scenes in the story which were displayed along with a large picture of Petunia. Several months later the children still remembered this book and its theme.

Circus is always an exciting topic for small children. The Circus Baby, by Maud and Miska Petersham, offers an excellent source for imagination and dramatic activity. Students will want to become elephants and clowns and experience scenes from this story.

In Caps For Sale, by Esphyr Slobodkina, a peddler falls asleep under a tree while he is wearing his many hats for sale. The monkeys in the tree take all his hats while he sleeps and won't give them back until he awakens and throws his own hat in disgust. Monkey see, monkey do! Kindergarten children enjoyed pantomiming this story while it was read aloud. Caps were used as props.

Animals are a major topic to young children. They can easily "grow" ears, hop, and wiggle their noses like rabbits. It is fun to be rabbits eating carrots and lettuce. Let's Make Rabbits, by Lionni, integrates science, art, and language for kindergarten children. First they listen to the story; then they become rabbits; last they make rabbits out of wallpaper and other materials.

A hen, cat, dog, and a mouse are needed for characters in The Little Red Hen retold by Galdone. Narrative pantomime is an excellent method to use for this story. The remaining students will become the audience while they listen, watch, and learn.

Students enjoy making masks and dramatizing the monsters in Where the Wild Things Are, by Maurice Sendak. The writer read this story to kindergarten students, and they roared and danced and had quite a "rumpus!" They drew exciting illustrations of their experience.

Poetry has a musical quality that attracts children and appeals to their emotion. It adds a new dimension to children's imaginative experiences.

Cookies are a part of a kindergarten day. To find that they had been eaten by someone else would

be a frustrating experience. Myra Cohn Livingston responds with humor to such a situation in 4-Way Stop.

Revenge

When I find out
who took
the last cookie

out of the jar
and left
me a bunch of

stale old messy
crumbs, I'm
going to take

me a handful
and crumb
up someone's bed.

Children want to use their bodies when they tell about an experience or feeling. A lead-in to sharing favorite experiences is the poem "Honey, I Love," by Eloise Greenfield, taken from the book with the same name.

I love
I love a lot of things, a whole lot of things
Like
My cousin comes to visit and you know he's
from the South
'Cause every word he says just kind of slides
out of his mouth
I like the way he whistles and I like the way
he walks
But honey, let me tell you that I LOVE the
way he talks
I love the way my cousin talks.

"Jam," by David McCord, in Every Time I Climb a Tree, gives children the opportunity to try out language.

"If I Were A . . .," by Karla Kuskin, in Dogs and Dragons, Trees and Dreams, sparks children's imaginations.

"Days That the Wind Takes Over" by Kuskin contains an obvious rhythmic pattern that will motivate children to move. They will want to clap and jump to "Rope Rhyme," by Eloise Greenfield (Honey, I Love).

Movement can be a way in which words become a part of the child. Children will always know the difference between sleepy and sleeping if they feel it with their bodies. Movement activities also involve the kind of physical coordination required for reading, and have a great value in the early grades as part of reading readiness. Meanings are intensified when words which describe things are enacted. Some that work well are:

bumpy	hot	angry	silly
sticky	damp	happy	lazy
smooth	funny	sad	suddenly

Action or "doing words" also make good dramatization. Examples of some that have been tried successfully are:

crawl	wiggle	dig	shiver
skate	fly	drop	bounce
rake	sniff	squirm	slide

Children can work in pairs and act out opposites, antonyms, and homonyms. The class can be divided into small groups to take turns pantomiming new words from various subject areas.

Science

The use of creative dramatics can create experimental activities to stimulate involvement, interest, and understanding in the various branches of science.

The beauty in nature should not be ignored. Children are curious to find out why things are, but they are also sensitive to the quality of things they see about them, and to how they make them feel. They want to know what makes fog, but they also feel the quiet mystery of fog. Time needs to be provided for children to explore the sense world: seeing and touching in a different way; pausing for the delicate odors of morning freshness; becoming absorbed in the unfolding of creativity (Pierini, p. 52).

The five senses are one area of science covered in this program.

Sight. A discussion can begin by asking the children what body parts they use to read books. They can work in pairs and look into each other's eyes and observe their own eyes in a mirror. Explain that an

eye functions very much like a camera and share the book Walk With Your Eyes, by Marcia Brown. Children are delighted with her photographs and quickly find their favorite ones. Children's imagination can be extended by asking what they might be able to see if they had a special pair of eyes.

Children can be guided to understand why some children wear eyeglasses and can be presented a display of various types of eyeglasses and goggles. Children can be encouraged to discuss Goggles, by Ezra Jack Keats. The children will enjoy making goggles from oaktag and colored cellophane or acetate, and acting out their favorite scene.

Children can see the effects of fog in Tresselt's Hide and Seek Fog. They will want to imagine that they are at the beach surrounded by fog. Children can engage in narrative pantomime after listening to Frank Asch's Bear Shadow.

After hearing Skyfire, by Asch, the children can paint rainbows. They can dramatize putting the "fire" out with imaginary pails of water. Stories can be composed and illustrations made about what they think they'd find at the end of a rainbow.

The picture book Guess Who My Favorite Person Is, by Byrd Baylor, describes favorite sensory experiences

through the dialogue of a young girl and a man. After the book is read aloud, the children can be asked to think of their favorite thing. They can take turns pantomiming to see if the others can guess.

Children begin to understand the outdoor world of nature by creative play. They like to become seeds and grow into flowers with the help of water and sunshine. They will want to create roses and many other beautiful flowers after listening to The Rose in My Garden, by Arnold Lobel. They will become rosebushes and make the seasonal changes when they pantomime "Rosebush," from Still More Small Poems by Valerie Worth.

In summer it
Blooms out fat
And sweet as milk;

In winter it
Thins to a bitter
Tangle of bones;

And who can say
Which is the
True rosebush?

Narrative pantomime will also work nicely with the poem "Mushroom" by Valerie Worth. This poem describes a mushroom pushing its way up through the soil and how it continues to grow. "Idea," from O Sliver of Liver, by Myra Cohn Livingston, is another poem children will want to act out.

I have
planted two seeds
in the ground, to sprout up,
grow tall, blossom together and
be friends!

"I Met a Man With Three Eyes," from I Met a Man by John Ciardi, is about a traffic light. Children need to learn safety at this age and can show the teacher what they will do when they see the different colors in traffic lights.

Taste. A table can be set with salt, sugar, lemon, chocolate, etc. The students can take turns tasting the various things while blindfolded and see if they can identify them. Students will then enjoy imaginary tasting to the poem, "A Matter of Taste," from There is no Rhyme for Silver, by Eve Merriam.

What does your tongue like the most?
Chewy meat or crunchy toast?

A lumpy bumpy pickle or tickly pop?
A soft marshmallow or a hard lime drop?

Hot pancakes or a sherbert freeze?
Noisy celery or quiet cheese?

Or do you like pizza
More than any of these?

The class can be divided into two groups and play "Magic Fruit Bowl." Each participant can be given a small picture of a fruit. The opposite group will try to guess what fruit that person has while he pretends to peel it and eat it. Then the roles can be reversed.

Little children love to taste things that are sweet. It is fun to watch their reaction when they hear "sweets," from Still More Small Poems by Valerie Worth.

Here
Is a list
Of likely
Words
to taste:

Peppermint,
Cinnamon,
Strawberry,
Licorice,
Lime:

Strange
How they manage
To flavor
The paper
Page.

Children can discuss their favorite sweet taste. They can also discuss what they would choose to eat if they could have anything, or what three things they would put in a make-believe sandwich.

Children can become caterpillars tasting many things as they hear A Very Hungry Caterpillar, by Eric Carle.

Smell. The poem "Suppose Again," by Eve Merriam (There Is No Rhyme for Silver), can be shared.

If I held onto my nose,
How could I smell a rose?
Or burning leaves,
Or a lawn fresh mowed,

Or the musty fust
Of a dusty road?
Or cinnamon buns,
Or hardware stores,
Or orange peels,
Or sawdust floors?

Well, I suppose
I won't hold my nose.

Still there is one vegetable
I'd just as soon not smell.
(Cauliflower! Glub!)

Children can be asked to think of smells that arouse a pleasant memory and tell about them. Objects, such as soap, paste, lemon, peanut butter, and chocolate can be placed on a table and children can take turns blindfolded identifying these objects by smell only.

Improvisations that are fun to do for smell are:

1. Smell a flower.
2. Peel and smell an onion.
3. Smell something burning in the kitchen.
4. Smell leaves burning.
5. Smell rubber burning.
6. Smell good, fresh country air.
7. Smell sour milk.
8. Smell cookies baking.

Hear. Narrative pantomime is a good method to use with the story Popcorn, by Frank Asch. After this experience, the popping of corn can heighten children's senses. They can watch the popping, smell the aroma

it makes, touch the kernels, discuss how it feels, and finally taste it.

The writer read the poem "The Song of the Pop-Corn," by Louise Abney, to kindergarten children. They became popcorn, popping faster and faster. Then they repeated the chorus pop, pop, pop in the same tempo while the poem was recorded.

On a rainy day, the rain beating on the window can be listened to before sharing Rain, by Peter Spier. The children will relate to many happenings in the story and will want to tell what they did in similar situations.

Children can play their favorite parts of Listen to a Shape, by Marcia Brown, and become the sounds in Drummer Hoff, by Barbara Emberley.

Learning to whistle is fascinating to young children. Young students can pantomime while the teacher reads Whistle for Willie, by Ezra Jack Keats. Then they can try to whistle.

Children can provide the sounds for many stories or poems. They like to make loud thunder and gradually become quiet when the teacher reads "Hurricane," from Something New Begins, by Lillian Moore. The poem "Days That the Wind Takes Over," by Karla Kuskin, in Dogs and Dragons, Trees and Dreams, attracts children

because they can become the wind. Children can become quiet snowflakes while listening to "The Snow Fall" by Archibald Macleisch in Go With the Poem, edited by Lilian Moore.

Touch. New and old cakes of soap can be touched by children as they listen to the poem, "Soap," by Judith Thurman, in Flashlight.

> New cakes of soap
> have names you can feel--
> letters that stand up under fingers
> like ears, lips, eyelids
> on a soft face.
>
> Old cakes of soap
> are as smooth to stroke
> as a chin.

After listening to the poem, "Playing With Clay" also from Flashlight, by Judith Thurman, the children can express how clay feels and construct shapes using clay.

Children can pantomime walking barefoot on grass, snow, rocks, etc. and discuss how it feels after listening to "Going Barefoot," by Judith Thurman in Flashlight. Narrative pantomime activities can facilitate the experience of being on the beach in "Sitting In The Sand," by Karla Kuskin, in Dogs and Dragons, Trees and Dreams.

Exercises that children enjoy for the sense of feel are:

1. Hold a kitten
2. Light a match and burn your finger.
3. Touch water that is very hot.
4. Make a snowball with your bare hands.
5. Try on a pair of shoes that are too small.
6. Wear an itchy sweater.
7. Pick up a turtle.

Kindergarten children love animals and many pieces of literature for the young offer knowledge and experience in this area.

The writer read Snail's Spell, by Joanne Ryder to a kindergarten class. The entire class pantomimed the story while the writer read it for the second time. One student said, "Let's do it again," and the others immediately joined in. The students then drew pictures and wrote stories of animals they would like to be.

The writer also read Anansi the Spider, by Gerald McDermott. The students listened intently to the story, and then their fingers became spiders before they made chalk pictures of Anansi and his six sons. The next day, Robert ran into the room with wide eyes exclaiming that he had seen Anansi and his six sons in his back yard. He had tried to catch them, but they ran down the hill.

Karla Kuskin's "Bugs" in Dogs and Dragons, Trees and Dreams offers a pleasurable narrative pantomime experience.

> I am very fond of bugs.
> I kiss them
> And I give them hugs.

From the same book, the poems "The Porcupine," and "The Snake," also can be pantomime experiences.

Children can move like turtles to the poem "turtle," from Still More Small Poems, by Valerie Worth. Turtle Tale, by Frank Asch, is a story young children will enjoy dramatizing.

The picture book Sylvester and the Magic Pebble, by William Steig, is an excellent book to share with children while studying the seasons. The pictures clearly show the changing seasons. Children can use their imaginations when asked what they would wish for if they could touch a magic pebble. Sleepy Bear, by Lydia Dabcovich, also shows the changing seasons and can explain hibernation. Students like to retell the story by using flannelgraph props.

During the winter season, children enjoy listening to The Mystery of the Missing Red Mitten, by Steven Kellogg. It is a humorous story to dramatize and also to illustrate. Kate's Snowman, by Kay Chorae, is another story of winter activity. From Snowy Day,

by Ezra Jack Keats, narrative pantomime can evolve. The poem "January," from O Sliver of Liver, by Myra Cohn Livingston, will make the children shiver.

> Here we are, Winter,
> Just you and I in the snow
> freezing together.

Winter activities can be dramatized. Children can pretend to dress very warm and discuss how cold it is as they go outside in the snow. They can dramatize how to make a snowman, ice skate, shovel snow, feed the birds, and throw snowballs.

When spring comes, children can discuss growing things and changes that occur in the spring and then pretend to become those things. They can imagine tasting chocolate Easter eggs and jelly beans and pantomime walking in the rain after listening to Rain Makes Applesauce, by Julian Scheer.

Summer fun can be pantomimed after listening to the poems "On The Skateboard" and "On Our Bikes" by Lillian Morrison in Go With the Poem. Narrative pantomime will also be fun for "Hydrant," "Campfire," and "Flashlight," by Judith Thurman in Flashlight.

Young children can dramatize animals in the fall preparing for winter. They will enjoy becoming squirrels hiding nuts, birds flying south, and bears crawling into caves to hibernate. They can pretend

to rake leaves, or become the leaves being blown by the wind.

Social Studies

Creative dramatics offers firsthand interaction in social experience. There are many ways to integrate drama into social studies. The following categories will be used for units in social studies: family, friends, relationships with others, holidays, occupations, and travel.

Family. Narrative pantomime was used the first time Just Like Daddy, was read to a kindergarten class. Later the story was taped while the writer read the story and the children repeated the refrain. The activity was extended to making books with the same name but with personal experiences. The kindergarten children illustrated the pictures after dictating their stories to fifth-grade students.

No Bath Tonight, by Jane Yolen, is a story about a small boy who refuses to take a bath until his grandmother shows him how to make kid tea. Children delight in acting out their favorite part.

Now One Foot, Now the Other, by Tomie de Paola, is about a very special relationship between a boy and his grandfather. As this story is dramatized, children seem to grow in their understanding of the

boy's role in helping his grandfather walk again while recuperating from a stroke.

After listening to The Bedspread, by Sylvia Fair, children will want to find a partner and pretend to be the sisters in bed stitching. Cooperation, caring, and making good use of time can be stressed after sharing this book. The children can then use their partners to design their own bedspreads with paper and crayons.

Friends. Sleeping overnight with a friend is an exciting adventure for young children. Ira Sleeps Over, by Bernard Waber, is about a boy who is going to stay all night with a friend for the first time and does not know whether or not to take along his teddy bear. The part chosen to act out by the writer's class was Ira's discovery that his friend also slept with a teddy bear. Then he goes home to retrieve his bear, "Tah Tah," and as a result the boys' friendship is strengthened.

After discussing feelings, A Letter to Amy, by Keats, can be read. Expressions can be pantomimed as Peter is very sad at his birthday party until Amy comes, and then he becomes very happy.

Other books that address friendships are:

Cohen, Miriam, Best Friends

Cohen, Miriam, Will I Have A Friend

Kafka, Sherry, I Need A Friend

Lionni, Leo, Fish is Fish

Relationships With Others. Children can become various animals in Once A Mouse, by Marcia Brown, and learn that they should be happy with who they are. One Fine Day, by Nonny Hogrogian, will also teach a lesson in not always wanting more. Children will enjoy various parts of the story, but especially the part when the old woman sews the tail back on the fox. The Little Rabbit Who Wanted Red Wings, by Carolyn Sherwin Bailey, is another story appropriate for self satisfaction.

Children can become the fish that swims at the very end of the story in Swimming, by Lionni. They can also become the hens in The Most Wonderful Egg In The World, by Helene Heine. Discussions can follow stressing that all people are equal regardless of size, shape, color, etc.

The writer used props to tell the story Stone Soup, By Marcia Brown. The children played the parts of the soldiers and townspeople when they made the soup. The students enjoyed listening to Nail Soup by Harve Zemach and comparing it to Stone Soup.

Telephone conversations can be dramatized to learn the proper ways to use a phone. The teacher first

role played with students and then the children worked in pairs. The behavior in other social situations can be acted out and emphasized in the same way.

Holidays. Many activities took place in the writer's kindergarten room at Thanksgiving time. Half of the class became Indians hunting the other half who were turkeys. The Indians then showed the Pilgrims how to plant corn, fish, and hunt. The Pilgrims hunted cranberries, picked corn, made pumpkin pie, and roasted turkey and fish. Finally, the first Thanksgiving was dramatized.

Marc Brown has written many holiday stories that young children will relate to and can dramatize.

Arthur's Christmas

Arthur's Halloween

Arthur's Thanksgiving

Arthur's Valentine

Arthur's April Fool

Occupations. Studying about a variety of occupations is a part of the kindergarten social studies curriculum. Pantomiming helps children to identify with the duties and responsibilities associated with occupations.

The writer provided several pairs of old shoes and chairs to create a drama centered in a shoe store. Several students became customers and took turns trying

on different pairs of shoes with the help of children who played the role of shoe store clerks. After changing their minds many times, the customers ended up purchasing their choices.

Travel. Children enjoy imagining a visit to some other place and learning about the people, such as their food, homes, and play.

The writer's class took an imaginary trip to Hawaii. The teacher had visited the islands, so she shared pictures, articles, and experiences. The girls danced to Hawaiian music in grass skirts, and fresh pineapple was cut and eaten. The state was located on the globe, and the concept of an island discussed.

Mathematics

The application of mathematics in real-life situations is important. The movement from the concrete to the abstract can often be reinforced through the use of make-believe and "let's pretend." Many story problems are suitable for dramatizing and allow children to see how math is used in a concrete sense. Buying and selling situations, planning enough food for a picnic, or serving a birthday cake to the class are situations that might be dramatized. Students brought in empty containers to develop a grocery store. Signs were painted to write numbers for prices of items on

sale. A cash register was used and play money was counted to purchase groceries.

Counting games and songs can also be dramatized. The poem "Guess," by John Ciardi, in I Met A Man, is an excellent poem to use for number sequencing. It also integrates math with science.

> ONE is a creeper and sleepy in his shell.
> TWO is a hopper and he hops very well.
> THREE is a flopper and his flippers flap.
> FOUR is a jumper with a jump-in lap.
> FIVE is a drinker with a dip-in nose.
> SIX is a dipper with flippers on his toes.
> SEVEN is a tapper with a tripper in his beak.
> EIGHT is a nutter with a nut-sack in his cheek.
> NINE is a hanger with a banger in his head.
> TEN is The Stopper who stepped in and said:
> "It's time for the guessing. Here in a line
> Are all the numbers from one to nine.
> Now look about you, and right or wrong
> Guess, if you can, where they belong."

Over In The Meadow, by Ezra Jack Keats, is also fun to use for counting.

Movement and pantomime activities may be used to involve children in learning shapes such as joining hands and using their bodies to form a circle, square, rectangle, and triangle. Other basic concepts can be dramatized by kindergarten children. The writer used red yarn and had the students walk over and under it to understand the concept of "over" and "under." To understand "near" and "far," students took turns standing near and far from objects and from each other.

The children pantomimed big and little by stretching their bodies and then making them very small. Some of the children stood together in large and small groups to depict the meaning of "more" and "less."

Students will enjoy having a scavenger hunt after dividing into teams. Each team sends one person to the leader, who whispers an article they are to bring back. The team may help find it, but the leader brings it back. The first person back wins a point for his team. Examples:

something square

something oval

something that measures time

something heavy

something long

something blue

Responses To The Program

Recordings of oral language were made from a sample of kindergarten children in the fall. A creative dramatics program for the children had just begun and was being extended to all subject areas. Three boys and three girls from both the morning and the afternoon classes were used as subjects.

Each child chose a picture to look at and then was asked to tell a story about that picture. The

stories were recorded and kept to compare with stories recorded by the same students, using the same procedure, later in the year.

The stories recorded in the fall were very short. They averaged five words and were actually brief descriptions of the pictures and not stories at all.

During the school year, these children participated in the creative dramatics program. When they recorded oral language in the spring, they were more confident and anxious to tell their stories. At this time, several pictures were displayed for the children to choose from and they selected one with ease. Each child developed a complete story about their picture. These stories were better organized indicating that the children had developed more sophisticated thinking strategies. The stories were much longer and averaged twenty-five to thirty words. The children also used a greater variety of word classes. Expression and imagination were apparent in their new ability to compose orally.

The purpose of this study was to foster the development of thinking-language abilities of young children through creative dramatics. It is the writer's conclusion that this program has been successful and rewarding. It seems to be a way for children to develop thinking-language abilities in a natural and wholesome way.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The urge to question, to invent, and to perform has been stifled in millions of school children. In schools a higher priority needs to be placed on the fostering of creative expression and imagination. Educators need to recognize, in developing programs for children, that everyone has the potential for some form of creative expression. This potential can be nurtured or thwarted by the strategies used in learning environments.

Creative expression activities extend thought strategies and can encourage experimentation. The goals of programs that seek to foster creativity should be to nurture alertness, curiousity, responsiveness, and independence. Creative dramatics provides ways of meeting such a challenge in all areas of the curriculum.

Informal dramatic experiences are of value to all children. Creative dramatics can be established as an integral part of the school day. It need not be considered a special subject area. It can easily be used in conjunction with any other subject area.

Drama experiences can foster growth in thinking and knowledge about language. Encouraging children to think and express ideas is an important concern in creative dramatics. The language knowledge which can result from creative dramatics can allow children to realize the wonder of exploration through the language processes.

Quality literature should be the basis for experiences with creative dramatics. Literature can provide new and interesting words, and fascinating experiences with the sound of language, and childlike conflicts.

Creative dramatic experiences offer children the opportunity to develop self-discipline and self-esteem, to express strong feelings without fear, and realize a goal and as a result achieve dignity and win the respect of others.

The role of the teacher as the leader in creative dramatics is one of providing adequate stimulation for putting creative thinking into action. The leader capitalizes on children's strengths and shows acceptance and respect for children both verbally and nonverbally. An atmosphere of involvement is encouraged which allows children to explore and find answers for themselves.

The leader must be interested in the total child and provide a feeling of trust.

Unfortunately, most people acclaim the value of creative drama, but few seem to be incorporating it into the school curriculum. An organized and continuous program of creative drama is the exception rather than the rule. Perhaps one reason for the slow acceptance is that teachers do not realize that formal training in drama is not needed. Another reason might be that they are unaware of the benefits that children receive from using such a program. Inservice sessions need to be provided to alert teachers to creative dramatic programs and also to acquaint them with the best procedures and techniques to use with literature. Teachers need to develop a criteria to assist them in selecting quality literature and related drama activity.

A continuing program of creative drama strengthens the integration of thought, action, and language for young children. In a creative dramatic session, children learn to listen and to concentrate. They develop understanding of language use. Most important, perhaps, is the joy they realize in using their thinking-language potential to learn.

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