

THE HISTORY AND USE OF CREATIVE DRAMATICS
IN THE CLASSROOM

DATE

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To Look At Anything

To look at anything,
If you would know that thing,
You must look at it long:
To look at this green and say
'I have seen spring in these
Woods,' will not do--you must
Be the thing you see:
You must be the dark snakes of
Stems and ferny plumes of leaves,
You must enter in
To the small silences between
The leaves,
You must take your time
And touch the very peace
They issue from.

John Moffitt*

*Ruth Beall Heinig and Lydia Stillwell, Creative Dramatics for the Classroom Teacher (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1974), p. vi, citing John Moffitt, The Living Seed.

PART I

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE DRAMATICS

Creativity and Drama

The term "creative dramatics" has been in existence for a little over fifty years. Yet, the theories that make up creative dramatics have developed over centuries. Winifred Ward had been experimenting with ideas of creative dramatics long before she coined the term in 1930.¹ Ward chose to combine the terms "creativity" and "drama" in an attempt to describe the use and purpose of the ideas she had established. It is perhaps best to begin a study in creative dramatics with an investigation of the two terms which define it.

Creativity is inventiveness. It is taking "known bits of information and putting them together in a way that no one else has thought of before."² Children are instinctively creative. They see a block of wood on the ground, pick it up and it becomes a gun. When it is back down on the ground, it's a car. It is a child's creativity that makes him unique. There are many types of creativity, but the common denominator of all types

is the role of the imagination. "Imagination is the quality of the mind and spirit that enables one to understand experience beyond his own."³ The child has never held a real gun, but his imagination allows him to see and believe in that gun. Imagination is a tremendous faculty, for it removes the limits of our daily lives and allows us to creatively experience the elements in our world as well as in our minds. This creativity and expression is what makes mankind unique from all other living creatures. A child must be free to develop his mind, his body, and his imagination in order to "realize himself fully as an individual."⁴

For all the wonder that creativity holds for a child, it is seldom utilized in the educational realm. In grade schools, an hour a week is set aside for art, while high schools have certain electives set aside to develop "creativity." But overall, creativity is excluded from everyday learning. "Part of the reason for the present attitude toward creativity in education can be traced to a basic work/play dichotomy in our culture."⁵ A child is supposed to enjoy play, but it is considered peculiar if he likes work. Perhaps the role of creativity in the everyday classroom deserves another look. After all, a child who finds a world of resources in a piece of wood on the ground may be able to contribute more to the classroom and eventually to the world.

There is one more term that must be explored briefly before we can fully examine creative dramatics. Drama is defined as a "series of events suggestive of those of a play."⁶ There is a slight problem with this definition as with most others: drama is not a play. There are informal dramatic experiences which have nothing to do with scripts, plays, or stages. These are the experiences that creative dramatics uses to foster and enhance the imagination and resulting creativity inherent in the child. Rather than separating drama as a class by itself, creative dramatics uses drama in the daily classroom, attempting to make children "alert, curious, responsive, independent individuals."⁷

Elements of Creative Dramatics

Now that we have examined the component parts of creative dramatics, it is time to look at the entity itself. Creative dramatics involves three elements: "a group of children, a space large enough for the children to move about freely, and a leader who understands the philosophy and techniques of creative dramatics as a stimuli for the development of a well-integrated child."⁸ Only with these three elements can creative dramatics exist effectively. But then, what is creative dramatics? Perhaps the clearest definition was offered by Winifred Ward who defined creative dramatics as "all forms of improvised drama created by children themselves

and played with spontaneous dialogue and action."⁹ This includes all forms of drama such as dramatic play, story dramatization, impromptu pantomime, shadow and puppet plays, and all other extemporaneous drama.¹⁰ Any type of children's play could be considered creative dramatics to some extent, but creative dramatics is more structured than children's play. Its aim is not merely to entertain the child but to help him develop socially, emotionally, and physically. It is not the product or the end result of the dramatic play that is important, but rather the process. The child learns to work with others while developing his creative imagination. The teacher also makes use of what the class is learning in other subject areas. Creative dramatics is not an isolated project in which the class forgets their school work and begins to play. Rather, it takes the concepts learned in English, math, and social studies and expands them through the use of imagination. "What other project can combine use of the skills in the basic subjects of math, social studies, and language arts, plus reinforcing in the children responsibility, cooperation, self-expression, and self-confidence?"¹¹

There are four elements in a dramatic activity: 1) action, 2) sensory awareness, 3) emotional attitudes and behaviors, and 4) verbal interactions.¹² But children are unable to grasp these concepts all at once. So creative dramatics is developed in a group slowly, step

by step. Creative dramatics is begun with exercises to make a child aware of his surroundings and his own ability to perceive these surroundings. Eventually, action and activity are introduced. Once the child has mastered psychomotor skills, emotions are incorporated which modify these actions. Finally, and only after the child feels comfortable with himself physically, vocal aspects are included. Each of these stages, from the simplest sensory awareness exercise to the most complex improvised play, are creative dramatics. But one must always be aware that creative dramatics is a gradual process. And only after the process has been experienced gradually can the student feel comfortable and relaxed enough to benefit from the experience.

CHAPTER II

BRIEF HISTORY OF CREATIVE DRAMATICS

The Roots of Creative Dramatics

The beginning of creative dramatics is not easy to pinpoint for it began long before Winifred Ward coined the term. It does, in fact, have its roots in the rituals of primitive tribes, improvised drama of the Dionysian festivals, medieval interludes, and Italian commedia dell' arte.¹³ The need to create drama in some shape or form is evident since the beginning of time.

The first theories of creative dramatics were developed by Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) who led a revolt in the late 18th Century against teaching practices in Europe at the time.¹⁴ He rebelled against the rote learning and memorization that characterized teaching and emphasized instead preparing a child for life. He wanted children to be taught how to think and not just what to think. To achieve this end, "he emphasized exercises in sense impression and language."¹⁵ Gradually, these ideas began to influence the educational philosophy which influenced childhood education. More attention was focused on the child's growth and development in learning.¹⁶ Educators began to see that crea-

tivity, which had never held a prominent position in education, needed to be fostered. If a child's creativity is not allowed to flourish during his time in school, how can he be expected to leave his schooling and become a creative and productive adult? And not only does creativity have to be allowed to flourish, it has to be stimulated and maintained.

The Development of Creative Dramatics

By the 1870's, the Pestalozzian methods were beginning to influence much of educational theory.¹⁷ It was Edward Austin Sheldon who first applied the Pestalozzian theories to actual classroom practice.¹⁸ Sheldon spent many years studying Pestalozzi's theories and then conducted his own experiments based on these theories in the schools of Oswego, New York.¹⁹ He believed the curriculum and the classroom should be adapted to suit the needs of the child. The child should not conform to the school. "Sheldon's early reforms did much to help free the classroom environment from its formal rigidity, its almost total reliance upon rote methods of learning, and its emphasis on almost exclusively written communication by introducing spontaneous activity and oral discussion into the classroom."²⁰ School authorities recognized the effectiveness of the dramatic means emphasized by Pestalozzi and incorporated by Sheldon. Although dramatic activities did not spread immediately,

school authorities began to consider making room for dramatic activity within the program.²¹

A great contribution was made to the development of creative dramatics by the Francis Parker school during the first half of the 20th Century. Founded by Francis W. Parker in 1901, the school was based on the philosophies of Pestalozzi and Sheldon.²² The school was formed around the idea that lessons taught graphically, through concrete ideas and activities, are those best learned. Oral expression was emphasized. In particular, reverbali- zation, the ability to put information learned into their own words, was stressed. Myth and fantasy were as important to learn about and experiment with as were math and science. The teachers urged simple improvised activities over a reliance on textbooks.²³

Innovations in the schools of Gary, Indiana in the early 20th Century also contributed to the development of creative dramatics. William Wirt introduced "Auditorium Activities"²⁴ into the curriculum of the schools. These auditorium activities were dramatic projects that combined a system of work, study, and play. Wirt made a move to make a play as much a part of education as study. There is no reason for a strict division between study and play when children can often learn as much from one as from the other.

The advent of the Progressive Education Movement under the guidance of John Dewey furthered many of the

theories on which creative dramatics is based.²⁵ The Progressive Movement was based on three assumptions:

1. proficiency and learning come not only from reading and listening but from action, from doing and experience.
2. good work is more often the result of spontaneous effort and free interest than it is of compulsion and forced application.
3. the natural means of study in youth is play.²⁶

Dramatic play was the perfect mode to put these assumptions into actions. The students could create rather than be told. It was not just spontaneous, but a natural extension of their everyday play.

It was not until Winifred Ward began working during the 1920's in the public schools of Evanston, Illinois that the idea of children's drama and its role in education truly developed.²⁷ Ward was the first to see the value of creative dramatics for the upper grades and also the value of helping teachers learn to use creative dramatics effectively. To this end, she wrote many books on the subject while working in the education department of Northwestern University in Illinois. Prior to 1932, only Northwestern University under Ward offered courses in creative dramatics. By 1957, two hundred colleges and universities offered courses, and as late as 1963 only two hundred and fifty schools offered courses involving creative thought and activity.²⁸

At this point, creative dramatic study appears

to be increasing at an adequate pace. However, by 1970 "about ten million children a year were seeing live performances. But students preparing to be teachers who had availed themselves of such opportunities remained small."²⁹ The emphasis on creativity brought about by the advent of creative dramatics in the sixties has diminished somewhat in the late seventies and early eighties. In 1982, Barbara Iverson, an author and teacher, observed that "the ability to take a playful outlook is an important part of creative thought but too many of today's classrooms discourage playfulness---and squelch creativity."³⁰ Creative dramatics demands considerable time and enormous amounts of patience as well as some dramatic skill. Therefore, such reluctance is not entirely without justification. "Many teachers still feel unqualified or reluctant to participate in children's drama, particularly in creative dramatics."³¹

PART II

CHAPTER I

THE ROLE OF CREATIVE DRAMATICS

Values to the Educational System

A student brings what he knows to every class he enters, from Kindergarten through college. The commodity he knows best is himself: his experiences, his imagination, his creativity. To teach this student, the teacher must build on what he knows. Not only must the teacher build on the skills the student has accumulated in English and math, he must also build and expand the student's creative imagination. However, "education, . . . tends to ignore the exploratory values of education and concentrates instead on specific tasks and skills."³² Certainly a person needs these skills to meet the realities of life, but he also needs imagination. He needs his own ideas to develop a philosophy to guide his life. Creative expression can lead education toward a more humanistic approach to learning. In our rapidly developing world it is no longer acceptable to teach students "rote responses to remote questions."³³ Instead, they must be taught to think and explore for themselves. The

answers provided today are more concerned with the past and the present than the future. "There are now definite needs for adaptability to rapid social change and flexibility allowing us to cope with problems yet to appear."³⁴

The role of the educational system in the past decades has become limited to a "putting in" function.³⁵ The teacher's job is to put information into the child's mind. "I teach, you learn" has become the role of the teacher. Creative dramatics reverses these roles. Instead of "putting in" information, the teacher's role becomes one of drawing out the child's personality and character through creative activities. This development outward deals with "the child's memory, understanding, will, imagination, emotion, observation - and person."³⁶

Creative dramatics gives the entire educational system a custom-made chance to ask the "what-if questions."³⁷ Not only can a student experience what is, but also what could be. Not only can he read a story such as The Miracle Worker and find out what it means to be blind, he can also close his eyes and explore his own environment without sight. This is a significant step: from reading, to understanding, to being. The student has now clarified his ideas through direct participation in dramatic activity. Creative dramatics takes the facts and concepts students have always been taught and incorporates problem solving and creative thinking to motivate a child to discover new skills

and new ideas. It is this ability to create that the child will need to prevail in society. Winifred Ward designated five means for developing creativity within the educational system:

- 1) Schools should give children many opportunities to practice democratic ideas.
- 2) Children should learn through meaningful experiences.
- 3) All children should be encouraged to think creatively.
- 4) Children should be educated for social living.
- 5) The whole child should be educated--physically, intellectually, and emotionally.³⁸

Values for the Student as an Individual

Creative dramatics can also promote the individual needs of the students. The process of using creative dramatics encourages the students to become more aware and capable of using imagination, concentration, the senses, the voice, the emotions, and the intellect.³⁹ Through these skills, creativity is developed. An individual is capable of producing his own ideas, yet remaining flexible enough to adapt to the ideas of others. He is also sensitive enough to his environment and his peers to rearrange and redefine his own ideas when necessary. Children who participate in creative dramatics learn that "speaking aloud with conviction and interacting with others . . . can bring deep satisfaction."⁴⁰

Children sometimes find it difficult to grasp the abstract concepts so often involved in learning. Creative dramatics provides an instrument for understanding the abstract ideas of language arts, math, or science. Through dramatization, physical and emotional illustration, students can use information in a "tangible and meaningful way."⁴¹ The students become part of the experiences and are therefore more likely to understand. If children can re-create the lives of people they study, they can understand the people, their times, and their theories. "The subject matter comes alive."⁴²

Creative dramatics provides an ideal opportunity for the individual to develop communication skills. Communication is vital to the social, educational and emotional development of the child. His interpersonal relationships for the rest of his life will depend on his ability to express himself through speech and movement. Through communication, the student learns to understand himself, others, and his world.

Although creative dramatics often seems to appeal specifically to the child, it is the young adolescent that often requires the individual benefits of creative dramatics.⁴³ "Teenagers need the means to express emotions."⁴⁴ They are experiencing new and different emotions, but at the same time they have outgrown their methods for expressing feelings. The tantrums, imaginary play, and inanimate playmates that were once viable

means of expressing emotion are no longer available. It is in creative dramatics that a new method may be found. For no one is singled out, no one is made to feel awkward or inept. "Each person's identity is preserved intact, yet comfortably submerged in the movement of the entire sea of bodies of which he is one small wave."⁴⁵

CHAPTER II

CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CREATIVE DRAMATICS

The use of the word "drama" in the term creative dramatics often connotes a more selective use than is necessary. The term "drama" mistakenly infers the use of memorized dialogue, scenery, costumes, and audience. While the formal drama of children's theatre involves these elements, creative dramatics is concerned with the growth and development of the child rather than the entertainment of an audience. Action and dialogue is improvised rather than memorized. "Theatre is largely concerned with communication between actors and an audience; drama is largely concerned with experience by the participants, irrespective of any function of communication to an audience."⁴⁶ There are no lines to memorize, no costumes, make-up or scenery unless it is improvised and spontaneous. In creative dramatics, talent is not a prerequisite for there is no audience to be considered. Everyone is allowed and encouraged to participate. Advocates of creative dramatics feel that for many children an audience would be harmful. In the early exercises, there should be no audience at all. All members of the class participate in the same activity at the

same time. As the child progresses and his confidence increases, he is able to perform before other members of the group. After the class is very experienced in the use of creative dramatics, they may wish to perform small activities for other classes. This idea should always be from the class rather than the teacher.⁴⁷ However, the added element of observers often encourages pretentiousness, which limits the opportunity for the spontaneity that allows the child to grow from the experience.

Creative dramatic activities are seldom rehearsed. Spontaneity is stressed in pantomime, improvisation and even storytelling. Children's theatre, on the other hand, relies on written scripts and well directed and rehearsed performance. But the one essential difference between creative dramatics and most other types of drama lies in the discussion and constructive criticism following each playing by the group. An exercise in creative dramatics is not done merely for the sake of the exercise but for the participants. In order for the child to develop, the exercise must be followed by an exploration of not only what was done, but why, how, and how it might be improved the next time. "Ultimately, theatre may always remain the concern of the few--drama will increasingly become a way of teaching and a way of learning for everyone."⁴⁸

PART III

CHAPTER I

THE USE OF CREATIVE DRAMATICS IN ENGLISH CLASSROOMS

Preparing to Introduce Creative Dramatics

When introducing creative dramatics in an English classroom, the teacher must always keep in mind that drama can't be used to understand or experience literature or speech until certain aspects of drama itself have been mastered. Creative dramatics is a process and must always be treated as one, never proceeding to step two until step one is mastered. The process of introducing creative dramatics is based on Pestalozzian theories of the early twentieth century.⁴⁹ The best order of activities is class, group, and finally individual.

In order to use creative dramatics effectively and efficiently, several conditions must exist. The first is adequate space. Adequate space does not always mean empty space. Although the students must have enough space to free their movements, blackboards and desks may sometimes encourage creative use more than empty space. Even so, the structured atmosphere of rows of desks facing the teacher lends itself better to the

"I teach, you learn" theory of education. Symbolically, it establishes the relationship between the teacher and the students, the leader and the followers. Yet, creative dramatics encourages students to experiment on their own. The area to be utilized should ideally include open space and some structure to encourage the mental creativity of the students. Unfortunately, creative dramatics must be able to survive within the existing environment. Few teachers are given the freedom to make major changes within the classroom. "Often the teacher must compromise, adjusting her sights to keep within the boundaries of reality and accepting the physical limitations that no amount of goodwill can overcome."⁵⁰ There still must be proper stimuli within this space. Although we are dealing with imagination, there is no reason to assume imagination must exist in a void. The right sound or picture often frees the students' imaginations.

Another condition that must exist is an atmosphere of encouragement for the child's own ideas. No one is "wrong" in creative dramatics and everyone is given the opportunity to contribute and explore his own idea. Sufficient time is necessary for true creativity to develop. Creativity is not a finite commodity that can be taught in a given time. The amount of time given to creative dramatics depends on the activity, the group of students, the instructor, and the environment.

Before creative dramatics can be utilized, an atmosphere of no interference or criticism must exist.⁵¹ The fundamental goal of creative dramatics is to encourage children to develop their bodies, minds, and senses. In order to fully realize this goal, the environment of a creative dramatics exercise must be one of complete trust. At no time must the student feel threatened by the possibility of judgment or ridicule.

The Steps in the Process

Initial activities in creative dramatics should always be class-oriented rather than individual-oriented. Embarrassment is reduced when no one is singled out. Each student is doing the same action at the same time. This does not necessarily mean that creativity is limited. Often, the security in having peers surrounding him frees an individual to experiment. He knows that he has no audience, for each student is concentrating on his own actions. The leader must always keep in mind that the activity is for the benefit of the student. It has no value in itself. No one should be forced to participate, for the benefit would be destroyed through that force. A student can participate in more ways than just doing an activity. He also participates when he observes, discusses, or analyzes. His participation depends on "his interest in the subject, his mood, his confidence, and his awareness of his own needs."⁵² Many

students choose to watch first until they become comfortable with the activity and the environment.

The introduction to creative dramatics in a classroom begins with the senses. The best way to prepare a child for his later experiences in moving, acting, and speaking is by encouraging him to open up all his senses to life around him. These early exercises involve listening, seeing, touching, smelling, and tasting. Yet, without developing these senses, the student is not sensitive enough to his environment to re-create it in pantomime, rhythms, and movements.⁵³ We begin by having every person in the class participate at the same time. Charles Duke, author of Creative Dramatics and English Teaching, believes these initial activities should involve group discussions on feelings.⁵⁴ However, at these early stages it is perhaps best to remain in the realm of the physical, leaving the unique demands of verbalization to a later stage in the process. Simple activities are designed to encourage a student's sensory awareness.

These activities lead to the use of simple pantomime. "Pantomimes are performances played in the language of action." This, too, begins with group activities, each member doing the same pantomime. As the children experiment with pantomimes, the actions will gradually become more complex as confidence increases and self-consciousness decreases.⁵⁵ Isabel Burger, author of Creative Play Acting, divides pantomime into three categories:

1) activity pantomime, 2) mood pantomime, and 3) change-of-mood pantomime.⁵⁶ Activity pantomime involves simply acting out a specific task. Once this is established, mood pantomime is introduced. Mood pantomime is not merely doing an activity, but also communicating a feeling about that activity. From mood pantomime, the students advance to change-of-mood pantomime. A student is given a situation and then a change in that situation. For instance, a student is told he is on a picnic in the woods. Suddenly, it begins to rain. He must determine how he feels on the picnic and how he feels when it begins to rain. He must communicate these emotions physically.

Only after the student has mastered the art of pantomime is dialogue introduced. Dialogue is a major step in the student's development and often results in a lull in his creative progress while the student struggles with the words.⁵⁷ Dialogue is created spontaneously by the students and does not involve written words or memorization. The use of dialogue within a pantomime is improvisation, the next step in the process of creative dramatics. Improvisation involves all the skills the students have been experimenting with up to this point: sensory awareness, movement, pantomime, and dialogue.

Storytelling is a separate, but no less important, aspect of creative dramatics. Storytelling is not necessarily limited to the final step. It can often be intro-

duced rather early in the process for the student is using the ideas and feelings of the author, rather than his own.⁵⁸ His job is to expand these ideas. This reliance on the thoughts of another lessens the demands on the creativity of the student.

The goal of storytelling is to help individuals re-create the events of a story. He does not merely tell the story but creates the images and emotions the author intended. Ruth Sawyer, author of The Way of the Storyteller, believes the discipline of storytelling must be exercised.⁵⁹ Before a student can portray a complete story, he should exercise his ability to communicate the story. He must take certain objects and ideas and embellish them with specific details. For instance, the teacher selects a traditional story, such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears. The class is then asked to concentrate on one object, the kitchen of the bears. What is the shape, color, and size of the table; what color are the walls? Together the class creates specific details of the kitchen. This does not mean that they would use all of these details in their story. Rather, it encourages the students to find and communicate explicit aspects of a story which will enhance that story for his listeners. The students must exercise this ability before he is able to use it effectively in telling a story.

A true storyteller displays four characteristics:

1) experience, 2) background, 3) creative imagination, and 4) a gift for selection.⁶⁰ When introducing storytelling, a teacher should work on each of these skills. To develop experience in storytelling and in selecting stories, the teacher must encourage participation. You cannot teach "a gift for selection" but as students tell and listen to stories, they gradually develop an idea of the type of stories that work best. Background is one area the teacher can actively encourage. The students must build a background for their stories by reaching out to the world around them and gathering data to use later in his stories. The teacher has been encouraging the use of creative imagination since the introduction of creative dramatics. He must continue with the exercises in introducing creative dramatics and at the same time begin exercises in storytelling.

CHAPTER II

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

"The most important single factor in the use of creative dramatics as a genuine part of education is the teacher."⁶¹ The role of the teacher is that of a guide allowing the students to discover creative dramatics. He is not a director as he would be if he were producing a play. The leader of creative dramatics must motivate the interest and excitement of the students through presentation of ideas, planning activities, participating when relevant, and evaluating the entire process.

Creative dramatics consists of planned, organized activities. It is the teacher's role to do the organizing. Every activity needs structure and organization in order to be carried out effectively. Some teachers are afraid to incorporate structure in creative dramatics activities for fear of stifling creativity. "But groups need organization; people need limits; and creativity needs disciplined structure."⁶² As the group develops, they will begin to make decisions on their own and the leader's role will be as a guide for the students, leading them to discoveries of their own.

The leader must organize the material for the activities according to the group's ability. "To tax the children beyond their capabilities may frustrate them; to underestimate their abilities will stifle thinking."⁶³ The teacher must therefore always be aware of the capabilities of his class.

The teacher of creative dramatics must begin the process with himself. Before examining the students' needs the teacher must understand his own behavior as a teacher and the resources he has. Not everyone can be a successful leader. Then, the leader examines and analyzes the class. Creative dramatics asks a student to bring forth a large part of himself for everyone to see. Before asking this, the teacher should be as prepared as possible for what he will discover. He must pinpoint the needs, emotional behaviors, ethnic and experiential background, proportion of boys and girls, and reactions of the class as a whole and as individuals.⁶⁴ Only through this in-depth study can a leader determine what process will work best with his class. He also must consider the material he wishes to deal with and try to find the ideal way of bringing the material and the class together.

Teachers must realize three things. First, a teacher must value and use his own imagination. Until he understands his own imagination, he will be unable to communicate the value of imagination to a class. Second, to

properly educate the imagination, teachers must provide encouragement and constructive evaluation. And third, much good work can be done in this area without possessing a precise definition of imagination or creativity.⁶⁵

It is also the teacher's role to evaluate the use of the activities in creative dramatics. Although written tests are not a part of creative dramatics, this does not mean that all evaluation ceases. Creative dramatics actually invites continuous evaluation, but within the context of what is created, not as an external element. Evaluation in creative dramatics involves discussion and constructive criticism.⁶⁶ The teacher's role is to establish what was good and to encourage the observers to see some good. Then, the leader helps the group discover how it could be better next time. This way, what was not good can be improved without negative criticism.

Charles Duke established a list of rules for the leader of creative dramatics in Creative Dramatics and English Teaching:

- 1) Build an atmosphere for receptive listening.
- 2) Fend off negative criticism.
- 3) Make the children aware of what is good.
- 4) Stir the sluggish and deepen the shallow.
- 5) Make sure every sincere effort brings enough satisfaction to the child to enable him to try again.
- 6) Heighten sensory awareness.

- 7) Keep alive zest in creativity.
- 8) Be wise enough to halt the activity temporarily when creativity runs thin.⁶⁷

Before using creative dramatics in an English classroom, the teacher must make a definite commitment of time. He must acknowledge that the initial activities may have little to do with the teaching of English. He must also be prepared to defend these activities as a necessary starting point. Students cannot utilize creative dramatics in other subject areas until they understand the topic itself thoroughly. Once the teacher is aware of the demands of creative dramatics, he is ready to begin.

PART IV

CHAPTER I

INITIAL ACTIVITIES

Sensory Awareness

Introductory activities encourage the class to increase their sensory awareness. The exercises involve very little class time. Fifteen minutes is devoted to exercises in stimulating sight, smell, hearing, touch, taste, and movement.

Sight--Day One

exercise #1

Everyone in the class describes something he or she saw on the way to school. The teacher encourages more specific details by questions such as how big, what color. The descriptions are volunteered by the class with everyone encouraged to participate.

exercise #2

The teacher crumples a paper bag. The class volunteers ideas of what the bag looks like. As ideas run thin, the teacher crumples the bag and begins again.⁶⁸

exercise #3

The class is divided into pairs. If they are allowed

to choose their own partners, they are less likely to feel inhibited. The partners do a mirror exercise in which one partner "mirrors" the action of the other partner. This exercise has a dual purpose: the students are introduced to physical activity but the concentration is on sight which eliminates the anxiety of the movement.

Smell--Day One

exercise #1

The teacher brings in a variety of items that smell. The class smells each item and then must describe the smell in one word. The teacher encourages students to expand on simple adjectives as good or bad.

exercise #2

The class is divided into groups of three. Each member of the group must choose something to smell and then pretend to smell it. The other members try to guess first how the item smelled and then exactly what he smelled. This exercise introduces the students to the basics of pantomime but the emphasis is on the smell not on the action.

Hearing--Day Two

exercise #1

Everyone is quiet and listens to just the sounds inside the room itself. After two minutes, they describe what they heard. Then the exercise is repeated with just the sounds outside the room. After the exercise, the

teacher asks whether it was easy or difficult to just listen for two minutes at a time. What external noises interfered with listening? What internal noises interfered?⁶⁹

exercise #2

Everyone must bring a sound to class. It can be any sound at all as long as it can be made in class. The students close their eyes and try to guess what the sound is.

Touch--Day Two

exercise #1

The students are asked to touch different objects in the classroom. They make a list of adjectives and the other members try to guess what he felt.

Taste--Day Two

exercise #1

Describe what you tasted for breakfast this morning. Do not describe the food, merely the taste. The teacher encourages the class to avoid descriptions of size or color and concentrate simply on taste.

exercise #2

The class is divided into small groups. Each member of the group pantomimes eating something that tastes a specific way: sour, sweet, bitter, etc.

During the first days, the teacher concentrates on expanding the sensory awareness of the students.

He makes no attempt at all to connect these exercises to the lessons he is teaching in English. Yet, indirectly the exercises are connected. The students are expanding their vocabulary as well as their ability to observe, which are vital elements in learning to write. They are also working on speech skills. Most importantly, they are establishing a firm basis from which to develop their creative dramatics skills.

Movement---Days Three-Five

The students are now prepared to concentrate on physical activities. Through the first week of creative dramatics, the students have become familiar with one another and with the teacher. It is now time for them to become aware of themselves physically.

exercise #1

The mirror exercise is repeated but with emphasis on movement and variety rather than sight. The exercise is done by partners without anyone observing as an audience.

exercise #2

The students are puppets held by strings. They move as puppets as the teacher manipulates the strings by instruction. The strings are cut one by one with the puppets eventually falling to the floor.⁷⁰

exercise #3

A drumbeat is used to control the movement of the stu-

dents. They move in time to the beat, slowing down, speeding up, or ceasing movement.⁷¹

These simple exercises are a means to increase confidence in movement before pantomime is introduced. The exercises may last anywhere from one day to one week. The leader must judge when the students feel completely comfortable with movement in the classroom.

CHAPTER II
ADVANCED ACTIVITIES

Pantomime

The movement from the week before can now be structured into specific tasks or into pantomime. These pantomimes give students an opportunity to experiment with precise movement.

Simple Pantomime

Days 1-2

The teacher begins with simple pantomimes. The students are encouraged to experiment and be creative when acting them out. It is always easiest to act out a cliched movement for each pantomime. The teacher must always encourage: "Very good. Now why don't you try another way."

Suggested early pantomimes:

- 1) Trying on hats
- 2) Playing solitaire
- 3) Decorating for a party
- 4) Packing a suitcase
- 5) Fishing

- 6) Typing
- 7) Painting
- 8) Baking⁷²

Mood Pantomime

Days 3-4

The students are now ready to add a new element to their pantomimes: mood. Mood pantomime encourages the students to establish a general attitude or feeling about the activity. Many of the same pantomimes can be used from the list above.

The first day, the teacher suggests both the mood and the activity. This leaves the students free to concentrate on carrying out the activity. By the second day, the student will feel secure enough to select his own mood, activity, or possibly both. The teacher must be aware of the feelings of the students and make this decision accordingly.

Change-of-Mood Pantomime

Day 5

The final day of pantomime exercises can be spent on change-of-mood pantomime. These exercises expand mood pantomime to involve two or more moods.

exercise #1

You are waiting for a very important letter. You see the mailman coming. He comes right to your mailbox. You rush out to get the mail but the letter isn't there.⁷³

exercise #2

You are walking through the woods alone. It is very nice and you feel great. Suddenly, you hear the growl of a bear.

exercise #3

Sit in a chair as yourself. Now choose three other people you know. Sit in that chair as each of them.⁷⁴

The pantomimes explained above should be introduced initially as group activities. Gradually the students can begin to pantomime for others to see. The best way for the teacher to introduce the element of observers is to select someone out of the group and say, "That was very good, would you mind repeating it so everyone can see?" Eventually the students will learn to concentrate and experiment even with other students observing. If the teacher introduces the element too early, he will find it stifles true creativity and encourage instead pretentious displays purely for the entertainment of others.

Dialogue and Improvisation

Dialogue--Days 1-2

The students are now ready to include dialogue into their creative dramatics activity. The main emphasis in dialogue is for spontaneity and creativity.

exercise #1

Everyone says "hello" to the class in a given mood.

exercise #2

The class is divided into small groups. The teacher gives one person in the group a sentence. The other members must build a story, each adding their own sentence.⁷⁵

exercise #3

Everyone in the class opens the door. With one line, they must communicate to the class who is at the door and how they feel about that person.

exercise #4

Divide the class into groups. Give each group the locale of a scene, the character relationships and an opening line. The group must build a dialogue around the given circumstances.⁷⁶

Improvisation--Days 3-5

The students are now ready to combine their use of dialogue and pantomime in creating improvisations. At first, improvisations will be very demanding for inexperienced students. Therefore, the teacher must begin by suggesting as many elements of the improvisation as possible to limit inhibition.

exercise #1

The teacher gives students the characters and situations of the improvisations.

exercise #2

The teacher suggests a situation and the students create characters to carry out the improvisation.

exercise #3

The students create situations and characters of their own improvisations.⁷⁷

Storytelling

Storytelling is a new aspect of creative dramatics for the students. Therefore, the teacher should once again begin with group activities.

exercise #1

The leader tells a story. Everyone in the class pantomimes each character from the story. This is an opportunity for group activity. Next, dialogue is added. The story the teacher tells can be from literature, current events, or any other source.

exercise #2

Everyone in the class brings a story to class and tells it. He should be encouraged to tell the story, not read or memorize. The purpose of the storytelling exercise is to "make a story so much his own that it sounds like an improvisation."⁷⁸

CHAPTER III

CREATIVE DRAMATICS FOR ENGLISH TEACHING

The teacher has now reached a point where he can directly apply the use of creative dramatics to English teaching. Up to this point, the use of creative dramatics has indirectly helped to develop English skills. It is now time to utilize creative dramatics directly.

exercise #1

Before reading a play, design an improvisation that will directly relate to a situation in the play. An excellent example would be Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. Before introducing the play, set up an improvisation of a girl whose father forbids her to go out with her boyfriend and demands instead that she date his boss's son. Determine the girl's feelings and the father's reason. Now the students will be able to see a contemporary link with Shakespeare and may more readily accept and understand the play.⁷⁹

exercise #2

Improvisations can be used in specific instances of English studies. Students can further explore characters and stories in literature through the same story with their own created dialogue, they can truly understand

a story. Improvisation can also be used to further expand students' own writing.⁸⁰

exercise #3

Creative dramatics can be used to investigate poetry, especially Old English poems and Medieval Ballads. Through acting out the poems and using their own modern idiom, they will come to fully understand the meaning of the poetry and will then be prepared to explore the language of the poems.⁸¹

These are just a few examples of the use of creative dramatics in an English classroom. It can be a part of all areas of English and language arts, from speech to creative writing. This is not to say that language arts is the only subject area where creative dramatics can be utilized. It is in fact a valuable tool in all areas of study. It is most often used as supplementary material for it is obviously very difficult for a teacher to "grade" creativity and experimentation. Each of the above exercises is accompanied by a critical discussion period in which constructive criticism is emphasized. Since the goal of creative dramatics is to encourage individuals, helping them grow into creative, imaginative adults, no further evaluation is recommended. It is the one area of education where everyone can be right. And for this value alone, it is well worth the effort of the teacher who takes the time to discover creative dramatics.

PART V

CHAPTER I

THE FUTURE OF CREATIVE DRAMATICS

The Need for Change

Creative dramatics is not widely known and certainly not widely used. Part of the reason is that few people have the training to be effective leaders. But another part of the problem is the weaknesses in the present use of creative dramatics, when it is used at all. There is no continuation from grade to grade.⁸² A child might come into contact with creative dramatics in the second grade and not again until the eighth grade, if at all. In order for the process of creative dramatics to be successful, it should be introduced early and continued throughout the child's education.

Another problem in the present use of creative dramatics is the connotation within the name itself. Drama has been given a specific place and time in the curriculum and many teachers feel that should be enough. They don't meddle with drama because that has been taken care of already. "To make drama simply another subject in the already overcrowded curriculum is to shift the

emphasis away from people to drama itself."⁸³ Creative dramatics is for the benefit of the individual. It does not emphasize technique or history but rather the building of self-confidence and self-concept. There is a great difference between drama and creative dramatics. One should not exclude the other nor should it eclipse the other.

A further weakness in the use of creative dramatics is its struggle to exist within the confines of the traditional classroom. The freedom and experimentation of creative dramatics is hardly enhanced by the structured environment of the classroom. The classroom environment itself can be a hindrance to creative dramatics if it is allowed to be. However, creative dramatics can exist in any environment if it is encouraged, and a teacher should not rely on excuses of physical limitations to avoid becoming involved with creative dramatics. The basic elements are the teacher, the students, and the space to contain them.

Possibilities

The acceptance of creative dramatics as a valid part of the educational system will require some changes. Teachers will have to be educated as to its uses,⁸⁴ for many individuals feel uneasy about launching into an area that requires so much personal involvement. Programs for the future must focus on ways to make experi-

ences in creative dramatics a part of the continuous educational process. All that is needed are imagination, a desire to engage students in activities which will begin to prepare them for life roles, and a teacher who feels that education should allow students "to discover, to test, and to grow without fear."⁸⁵ Creative dramatics offers the teacher opportunities that will help prepare students for a world that is changing so rapidly that no one is certain what tomorrow may hold. We can no longer teach students the answers. Instead, we must teach them to discover not only the answers, but also the questions.

APPENDIX A*

PESTALOZZIAN THEORIES

1. The teacher must begin instruction with the senses.
2. A student should never be told what he can discover for himself.
3. The child should not be trained to merely listen: he should be actively involved in learning, since activity is a law of childhood.
4. There should be an abundant variety of activities available to the student.
5. Faculties should be cultivated in their natural order, first forming the mind and then furnishing it.
6. Reduce every subject to its basic elements and present one difficulty at a time.
7. Instruct step by step, since the measure of information is not what the teacher can give, but what the child can receive.
8. Every lesson should have a definite purpose.
9. Develop the idea first and then offer the term so language skills can be developed.
10. Proceed from the simple to the difficult, from the known to the unknown, the particular to the general, the concrete to the abstract.
11. Use the process of synthesis before analysis.

*Pestalozzi summarized by Charles R. Duke in Creative Dramatics and English Teaching.

APPENDIX B*

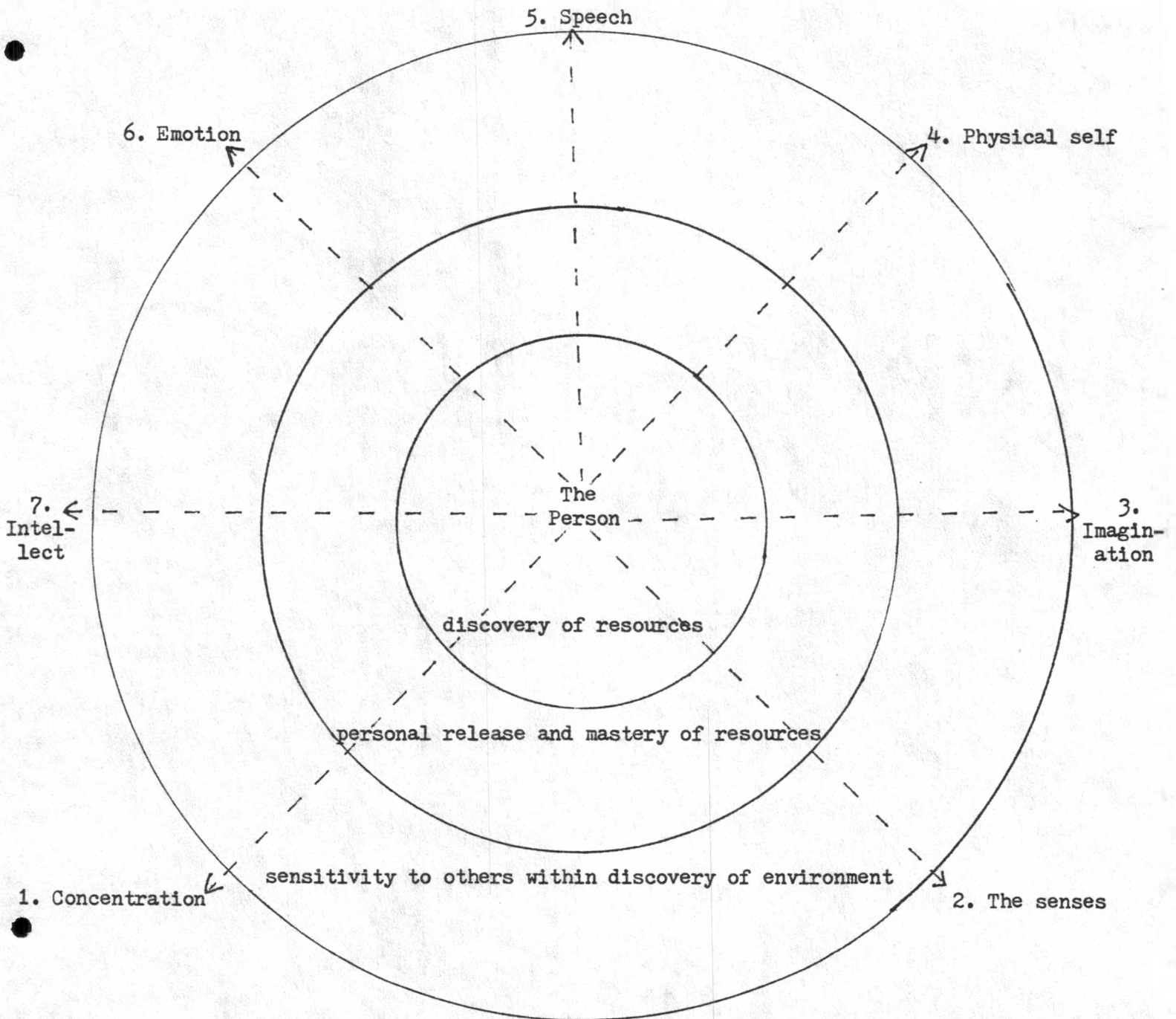
PRINCIPLES OF STORYTELLING

1. Select a good story--then tell it.
2. With the class, break the plot down into sequences, or scenes. . .note these.
3. From those noted. . .choose a scene, or scenes to be played.
4. Break the scene or scenes into further sequence.
5. Discuss the scene or scenes. Discuss setting, motivation, characterization, the times, physical make-up of characters, etc. Help the children to develop mental images of the characters, what they did, how they did it, why they did it.
6. Choose the players. Let them go into conference and plan in more detail what they will do during the playing period.
7. Plan with the youngsters who remain. Let them know the play will be re-cast and re-played and that they might pretend a part in the next playing.
8. Instruct youngsters to watch the play for five things they like and five things that could be improved on in the next playing.
9. With an agreed upon signal, start the play. Let it continue until it is finished.
10. Let the players return to their group, and have all evaluate the play.
11. Re-cast, instruct remaining students as in no. 8 and re-play the scene.
12. Evaluate. If time permits, re-cast and re-play.

*Dewey Chambers cited by Charles R. Duke in Creative Dramatics and English Teaching.

APPENDIX C*

GRAPH OF INDIVIDUAL NEEDS



enrichment of other influences both within and outside personal environment

*Brian Way, Development Through Drama.

FOOTNOTES

¹Charles R. Duke, Creative Dramatics and English Teaching (Urban, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1973), p. 24.

²Ibid., pp. 3-4.

³Ibid., p. 4.

⁴Ibid., p. 8.

⁵Ibid., p. 15.

⁶The World Book Dictionary, 1971 ed., s.v. "drama."

⁷Duke, p. 13.

⁸Ruth Lease and Geraldine Brain Siks, Creative Dramatics in Home, School, and Community (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), p. 125.

⁹Duke, p. 27.

¹⁰Winifred Ward, Playmaking With Children (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957), p. 2-3.

¹¹Peg Roberts, "Learning Through Drama," Design 79(May, 1978):24.

¹²Ruth Beall Heinig and Lydia Stillwell, Creative Dramatics for the Classroom Teacher (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1974), p. 14.

¹³Ward, p. 15.

¹⁴Duke, p. 20.

¹⁵Geraldine Brain Siks and Hazel Brain Dunnington, Children's Theatre and Creative Dramatics (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1961), p. 116.

¹⁶Duke, p. 19.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 21.

- 18Siks and Dunnington, p. 116.
- 19Duke, p. 20.
- 20Ibid., p. 21
- 21Ibid., p. 201.
- 22Siks and Dunnington, pp. 116-117.
- 23Duke, p. 22.
- 24Siks and Dunnington, p. 119.
- 25Ibid., p. 118.
- 26Duke, p. 19.
- 27Ibid., p. 24.
- 28Ibid., p. 29-30.
- 29Ibid.
- 30Barbara K. Iverson, "Play, Creativity, and Schools Today," Phi Delta Kappan 63(June, 1982):693.
- 31Duke, p. 29.
- 32Duke, p. 12.
- 33Ibid.
- 34Ibid., p. 3.
- 35Gabriel Barnfield, Creative Drama in Schools (New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1968), p. 14.
- 36Ibid., p. 15.
- 37Emily Gillies, Creative Dramatics for all Children (New York: Association for Childhood International, 1973), p. 21.
- 38Ward, p. 17-22.
- 39Duke, p. 28.
- 40Gillies, p. 21.
- 41Heinig and Stillwell, p. 6.

- 42Ibid.
- 43See Appendix C.
- 44Isabel Burger, Creative Play Acting (New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1950), p. 5.
- 45Gillies, p. 15.
- 46Brian Way, Development Through Drama (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1967), p. 2-3.
- 47Ibid., p. 4.
- 48Ibid., p. 7.
- 49See Appendix A.
- 50Joy Taylor, Organizing the Open Classroom (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), p. 17.
- 51Mildred R. Donoghue, The Child and the English Language Arts (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1971), p. 360.
- 52Heinig and Stillwell, p. 14.
- 53Gillies, p. 15.
- 54Duke, p. 18.
- 55Ibid., p. 121.
- 56Burger, p. 9.
- 57Heinig and Stillwell, p. 207.
- 58See Appendix B.
- 59Ruth Sawyer, The Way of the Storyteller (New York: Viking Press, 1942, p. 120.
- 60Ibid., p. 26.
- 61Way, p. 8.
- 62Heinig and Stillwell, p. 8.
- 63Ibid.
- 64Duke, p. 77-78.
- 65Leonard Davidman, "On Educating the Imagination: A Modest Proposal," Phi Delta Kappan 16(September, 1980): 24.

- 66Gillies, p. 19.
- 67Duke, p. 16.
- 68Peg Roberts, "Learning Through Drama," p. 24.
- 69Ibid., p. 25.
- 70Ibid., p. 26.
- 71M. Knoziol, Jr., "Dramatization and Educational Objectives," English Journal 62(November, 1973):1169.
- 72Burger, p. 27.
- 73Ibid., p. 48.
- 74Ward, p. 70.
- 75Ibid., p. 78.
- 76Burger, p. 52.
- 77Joseph C. Catalano, "The Show Will Go On . . . And On With A Continuing Drama Program," Teacher 90(March, 1973), p. 47.
- 78Ward, p. 120.
- 79M. Konziol, Jr., "Dramatization and Educational Objectives," p. 1168.
- 80Duke, p. 89.
- 81Lease and Siks, p. 14.
- 82Duke, p. 59.
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- 84Ibid., p. 60.
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