



Teachers Reflections on the Importance of Creative Dramatics in Their Elementary Classrooms
by Margaret Jacobson Coxwell

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Montana State University

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Abstract:

The purpose of this research was to ascertain the importance of creative dramatics in the pedagogy of ten elementary teachers.

The researcher used the qualitative method of idiographic analysis, in which each of the teachers' responses were analyzed. In addition, nomothetic analysis was applied to the data in which the responses of all of the teachers were compared.

Results showed that nine of the ten teachers made use of creative dramatics in their classrooms in spite of the fact that only two of the nine had creative dramatics training in their undergraduate studies.

The researcher concluded that the teachers' use of creative dramatics was not dependent upon their having had training in the subject. The teachers who made use of creative dramatics did so because they saw that drama activities had benefit for their students. This research study indicated that teachers' years of experience as educators encouraged them to seek inventive pedagogical strategies which included activities in creative dramatics.

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by

Margaret Jacobson Coxwell

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

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MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
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This thesis has been read by each member of the graduate committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to ascertain the importance of creative dramatics in the pedagogy of ten elementary teachers.

The researcher used the qualitative method of idiographic analysis, in which each of the teachers' responses were analyzed. In addition, nomothetic analysis was applied to the data in which the responses of all of the teachers were compared.

Results showed that nine of the ten teachers made use of creative dramatics in their classrooms in spite of the fact that only two of the nine had creative dramatics training in their undergraduate studies.

The researcher concluded that the teachers' use of creative dramatics was not dependent upon their having had training in the subject. The teachers who made use of creative dramatics did so because they saw that drama activities had benefit for their students. This research study indicated that teachers' years of experience as educators encouraged them to seek inventive pedagogical strategies which included activities in creative dramatics.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of my teaching career, I have worked with elementary students in a number of different settings in a variety of situations. From my earliest days as a teacher, I experimented with creative dramatics with children of various ages and came to believe that drama experiences, along with other experiences in the arts, have an important place in the education of elementary students.

Because I had little formal training in creative dramatics, I learned about the methods to use through personal research and experimentation. As I searched the literature, it became apparent to me that people who are experts in the field of creative dramatics differ in the methodology they recommend and even disagree about the way creative dramatics should be defined. However, several commonalities stood out: Creative dramatics involves process as opposed to performance; children benefit in numerous ways from the inclusion of creative dramatics in school experiences; and teachers who have little or no training in creative dramatics are not likely to use it as a pedagogical strategy.

As I continued to work with creative dramatics in the classroom, I became interested in ascertaining the views of other elementary teachers concerning the use of creative dramatics with children to see if various patterns exist. Curiosity about these views became the impetus for my study.

Significance of the Study

The arts serve as tools to express feelings, to respond to particular situations and to enhance learning in all aspects of the general curriculum. In addition, they assist in the development of cognition and emphasize the development of abilities in divergent . . . rather than convergent . . . thinking (List, 1982, p. 1).

Each art form, whether music, visual arts, or drama, represents a different symbolic system human beings use expressively to communicate with and to others. Drama in education is a way of learning and knowing symbolically different from most other ways of learning. For example, students can actually create the characteristics of characters and feel an author's intent through dramatization. The authenticity of drama creates new knowledge, presents different associations, and brings latent connections into active use to make sense of the world (Heathcote, cited in "Learning, Knowing, and Language in Drama," 1983).

Creative dramatics, first defined by Winifred Ward in the 1920s (Shuman, 1978), has been a part of elementary curricula throughout the United States and Great Britain to varying degrees since that time. Monetary cutbacks in education throughout the country have decreased spending in many areas, most significantly in the area of the arts (McCaslin, 1984). Huntsman (1982) stated that drama, in particular, is often regarded as an educational frill, not essential to the education of children.

Importance of Creative Dramatics in Education

The etymology of the word "drama" involves the root meaning "to do or live through" (Kelly, 1976, p. 7). This implies action on the part of participants. Drama contains an all-encompassing human component which integrates the activities in which people are engaged and helps them identify with others and their unique situations. Drama helps children find "the blood of things," the human element (Yaffe, 1989, p. 31). Drama tells a story, teaches concepts, and promotes the development of the whole person (O'Farrell, 1982).

Heathcote, who teaches courses in drama in England, stated,

Dramatization makes it possible to isolate an event or to compare one event with another, to look at events that have happened to other people in other places and times, perhaps, or to look at one's own experience after the event within the

safety of knowing that just at this moment it is not really happening. (quoted in Ross, 1988, p. 41)

Kukla (1988) asserted that in the process of creative dramatics children can take risks, be inventive, explore situations, and test solutions to problems with safety in ways not usually extant in the classroom. The hands-on involvement of students and student empowerment make the use of drama in the classroom a viable option (Yaffe, 1989).

Juliebo (1990) stated that the intrinsic value of drama lies in the thinking involved during the process of the work. "The use of drama in the classroom provides concrete opportunities to explore higher-level thinking abilities" (Gangi, 1990, p. 16). Yaffe, an Arts-in-Education consultant with extensive experience training teachers in drama, went on to say, "The fact is, drama is an extraordinarily versatile teaching tool, applicable to quite diverse student populations and needs" (p. 30). Creative dramatics helps students find meaning in their experiences.

Ross (1988) suggested that creative dramatics can help address the problem of the lack of attention given to the development of children's imaginations in the school setting. Within the school curriculum drama has been often perceived as only another subject rather than as an important part of the educational experiences offered. The

growth and impact of creative dramatics have been diminished by the constraints of time and of resources.

Wolfe (1978) said educators must try to humanize the curriculum in schools so that students will learn to live happily, productively, and peacefully in today's society. "Drama in education seeks to deepen children's understanding of themselves, others and the world they live in as they build an improvised drama through a process of group interaction and self-exploration" (Kukla, 1987, p. 73).

Woodruff (1982) stated that the creative dramatic process is able to provide a valid testing ground for young children in their exploration of social mores. Through the act of playing drama provides, children can explore and seek to understand the real world in situations that are free from natural consequences (Wolf, 1993).

Miller and Mason (1983) stated that creative dramatics develops the whole child without diminishing the uniqueness of the individual and that drama can improve student self-concept and attitudes toward school work. "The theatre is the only art form that deals with human behavior in a totally recognizable way" (Brizendine & Thomas, 1982, p. 5).

Social skills can be further developed in children by using drama as a means of attaining higher levels of moral decision making. Children move from an egocentric view of the world to one of cooperation. Benninga and Crum (1982)

suggested that students gain this cooperative perspective through involvement in the acting out of hypothetical dilemmas.

Courtney (1989), author of over 30 books on creative drama, asserted that children in all cultures can identify with the drama process in numerous ways. One can see children demonstrate the transformational power of dramatic acts in which they change from who they are into whom they wish to be. Creative dramatics can be a means of helping children build empathy for others. In addition, drama can help children see others' points of view.

During the process of dramatic activity children can learn about the content and conventions of the theatre, cultural learnings, ethics, and socialization skills. McCaslin (1984), author of Creative Drama in the Classroom and teacher of educational theatre at New York University School of Education, saw the following as valuable outcomes of creative dramatic work: developing imaginative and independent thinking skills, developing cooperation within groups of children, building social awareness, allowing a healthy release of emotion, building better habits of speech, and experiencing good literature. Nixon (1979) agreed that drama is an essential part of education where teachers can provide opportunities for children to create and implement their own ideas. These ideas served as a guide for this study by forming a basis for interviewing

teachers concerning their use of creative dramatics in elementary classrooms.

Teacher Preparation in Creative Dramatics

O'Farrell (1982), chair of the Arts Faculty of Education at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, author of numerous articles concerning creative dramatics, and co-author of a textbook on secondary school dramatic arts, suggested that practitioners of creative dramatics need to understand the diverse uses of drama so that they may present a united front in the battle to preserve and encourage the use of drama in education. Too often, however, according to Stewig (1986b), elementary classroom teachers come to the task of creative dramatics with enthusiasm but with a lack of knowledge of dramatic processes and techniques. His observations are based on his experience teaching language arts, language acquisition, and creative drama at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, and his research in creative dramatics, which has resulted in his many articles and several books on the subject. Drama benefits not only students but teachers as well by giving them a chance to acknowledge differing kinds of logic, a chance to reflect on how to struggle with new ideas, a chance to value the gifts of all students, and the chance to meet familiar ideas in new ways (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984).

Duke (1974) in his book, Creative Dramatics and English Teaching, advocated for the inclusion of creative dramatics courses at the college level. He suggested an outline for such a course. Elements recommended for study in a creative dramatics course included philosophy of creative dramatics; history of the theatre, with emphasis on relating child drama to the mainstreams of dramatic art; purposes of creative dramatics; values of creative dramatics for children; drama in the school curriculum; techniques in creative movement, dramatic play, story drama, role playing, and evaluative measures; and peripheral issues in creative dramatics, such as organizing classroom space for drama activities and education of parents concerning creative dramatics.

If, indeed, as Rosenberg, Castellano, Chrein, and Pinciotti (1982) suggested, teachers need to devote more energy to discovering the way creative dramatics works, to finding effective teaching techniques, and to ascertaining which factors influence relationships within the field of creative dramatics, it would seem that specific training in creative drama should be an essential component of elementary teacher education.

Questions Studied

According to Yaffe (1989), in order to use creative dramatics in the classroom, "What one needs is a sense of

adventure, a willingness to try something new, and staff development that is truly about development" (p. 31). If the claims of experts concerning the benefits of creative dramatics for children were true, and if indeed all that one needed to teach drama was good staff development, a question arose concerning the extent to which creative dramatics is in use in elementary classrooms. I became interested in knowing to what extent creative dramatics is actually considered important enough to be a regular component of the school day and what kind of training is available to teachers in the use of creative dramatics in the classroom. These ideas served as motivation for the following questions which were studied:

1. How do the elementary teachers who were interviewed define the use of creative dramatics?
2. In what ways do the interviewed elementary teachers use creative dramatics in their classrooms?
3. Do these elementary teachers view creative dramatics as an important aspect of their students' education?
4. What kinds of training are necessary for teachers to effectively use creative dramatics in the classroom? How have teachers obtained information about the use of drama processes with their students?

5. What are teachers' perceptions concerning the success or failure of students to learn through the use of creative dramatics?

6. What types of teaching strategies are used in the teaching of creative dramatics in elementary classrooms?

7. Are there any courses offered in creative dramatics on the college level at any of the four-year institutions of higher education in the state of Montana? If so, in what form are the courses offered, who teaches them, and are they a required portion of the elementary education curriculum? Are the courses offered at the undergraduate or graduate levels?

8. What advantages do college language arts professors in the state of Montana assign to the inclusion of creative dramatics in elementary education and in teacher education?

Purpose and Aims of the Study

Geoghegan (1994) wrote, "The arts are the 'minority' subjects in American education, and they suffer all the indignities of the downtrodden--low status, neglect, poverty, and powerlessness" (p. 456). Arts educators have the ability and the capacity to work toward a holistic approach to education. "The arts, properly taught, are basic to individual development since they, more than any

subject, awaken all the senses--the pores of learning"
(p. 458).

Creative dramatics has been in use in many classrooms in the United States since the beginning of the twentieth century (Kardash & Wright, 1987). Advocates for creative dramatics in the classroom claim that dramatic activities influence children's development and academic achievement. Creative dramatics, however, has two serious handicaps (Durland, 1975). These limitations are the lack of understanding of the possibilities that drama can bring to the classroom and the lack of training in the knowledge of how to obtain the desired artistic results. "One is not expected to teach reading without a thorough knowledge of method; there is a method of attack in producing creative plays that are artistically satisfactory" (p. 14).

Fowler (1988) suggested that "in general, classroom teachers are ill-prepared to teach the arts" (p. 57). Many prospective elementary teachers enter college well-versed in other areas but are almost totally ignorant of the arts and their importance. "One of the main reasons that the arts remain peripheral is that they exist outside the framework of what the elementary teacher is required to teach and is truly held accountable for" (p. 55). Most state departments of public instruction assign responsibility for the teaching of the arts to classroom

teachers, but seldom account for their education in these areas (p. 57).

Nelson (1988) agreed that "classroom teachers have not received training in drama and have therefore hesitated to use it" (p. 22). From the mid-nineteenth century to today, according to Martin and Ross (1988), the idea has been almost universally sanctioned that in formal school systems the arts should be taught by teachers trained and certified in arts specialties. But, as McCaslin (1984) claimed, budget cuts and lack of well-prepared teachers are often given as reasons for eliminating the arts or curtailing established programs. Many teachers, because they have little experience in the arts, are not comfortable with their inclusion in their classrooms.

Goodridge (1971) claimed that the success of creative dramatics depends primarily upon the interest and experience of teachers and their relationship with the classes they teach. Where drama classes are offered, they are often taught by teachers whose training was not in drama (Huntsman, 1982). Teacher training in the techniques of creative drama should be an important part of elementary teacher education (Gray & Mager, 1973; Kelly, 1976).

The purpose of this research was to find out whether or not creative dramatics was used by some currently practicing elementary teachers. In addition, I was interested in knowing the extent to which teachers had

training in creative dramatics and if the inclusion or lack of such education would indicate that creative dramatics should or should not be included in elementary teacher education. The above brief review of information gives an overview of past opinion about this topic. The most recent literature pointed to a continuing need for more teacher education in the arts than has been included in the past.

The aims of this research were:

1. To analyze the ways some elementary teachers use creative dramatics in their classrooms.
2. To discover ideas and perceptions that practicing elementary teachers have about creative dramatics.
3. To collect current perceptions of professors of language arts and of elementary teachers concerning the use of creative dramatics in the classroom and how they coincide with each other and with past findings.
4. To conclude, based on the findings of the research, whether the inclusion of a creative dramatics component in teacher education in Montana would provide a viable means for encouraging a more pervasive use of creative dramatics in elementary schools.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions were used throughout the study. These terms represent commonly used ideas in the field of creative dramatics, in qualitative research, and

in educational theory. In some cases more than one definition is given for a particular term as a means of furthering the understanding of the topic.

Aesthetics--those emotions which have freed themselves from association with practical interests (Vygotsky, 1971).

Children's drama--all forms of theatre by and for children (Goldberg, 1974).

Children's theatre--formal productions for children's audiences, whether acted by professionals or by amateurs, by children or adults (McCaslin, 1984).

Choral reading--oral reading of poetry that makes use of various voice combinations including sound effects, crowd noises, movement, etc. (McCauley & McCauley, 1992).

Creative behavior--the exhibition of fluency (ability to produce many ideas), flexibility (ability to produce different categories of ideas), and elaboration (ability to embellish ideas so they are more interesting) (Brizendine & Thomas, 1982).

Creative dramatics--a way of learning, a means of self-expression, a therapeutic technique, a social activity, and an art form, the most completely personal, most highly socialized art form human beings have (McCaslin, 1984); a process-related discipline in which participants recreate historical or dramatic happenings (Piggins, 1984); activities in which children, with the

guidance of a leader, spontaneously generate drama (Snyder-Greco, 1983).

Developmental drama--the study of developmental patterns in human enactment (McCaslin, 1984); concentration on developing imagination by a holistic view of the power of drama (O'Farrell, 1982).

Drama--a way of learning in a positive, joyful, and fulfilling way (Kukla, 1987); the act of crossing into the world of a story (Paul, 1991); "a real person in a mess" (Heathcote, cited in Shuman, 1978, p. xi).

Drama therapy--a dramatic technique used to help people solve problems (McCaslin, 1984).

Dramatic literacy--the ability to use drama as a way of gaining a better understanding of one's self and of one's place in the world (Collins, 1985).

Dramatic play--free play of very young children in which they explore the world, imitating the actions and traits of those around them (McCaslin, 1984).

Educational drama--anything which involves persons in active role-taking situations in which attitudes are the main concern, in which process takes precedence over product (Shuman, 1978).

Grounded theory--theory developed through inductive analysis of data; the theory emerges from many pieces of evidence that have been collected and which are interconnected (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Improvisational drama--drama without a script.

Informal classroom drama--an unrehearsed process in which students use their voices and bodies to interpret a piece of literature (Stewig, 1986a); an activity in which students invent and enact dramatic situations for themselves rather than for an audience (Forum, 1983).

Participation theatre--theatrical production in which the audience becomes vocally and physically involved (McCaslin, 1984).

Playmaking--makes use of a story to create a play with a beginning, and middle, and an end (McCaslin, 1984).

Qualitative research--methodology involving descriptive rather than empirical evidence to support results; the concern of qualitative research is with process rather than with outcomes or products (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Readers' theatre--oral presentation of drama, poetry or prose, by two or more readers (Wolf, 1993).

Reconstructed theory--systematically organized generalizations based on data (Wright, 1984).

Role play--assuming of a role for the particular value it may have to the participant rather than for the development of an art (McCaslin, 1984); students pretend to be other people in other places (Kukla, 1987).

Sequence drama--progression of sequences beginning with interpretive movement, simple characterization, and

plot development leading the child to create a drama with other children.

Story-drama--a process of allowing children to search into the deep meanings of a story and begin to build drama from it (Kukla, 1987); transforming a literary source into an improvised play (O'Farrell, 1982).

Story-theatre--brings about a human experience of deep reality as children work with text to develop drama (San Jose, 1988).

Syncretism--the attempted union of differing or opposing principles.

Theory-in-use--generalizations devised to analyze or predict the nature of behavior of a specified set of phenomena (Wright, 1984).

Warm-up--non-story improvisations designed to build concentration and help students eventually to change into characters (Miller & Mason, 1983).

Zone of proximal development--the distance between the actual developmental level determined by individual problem solving and the potential developmental level as determined by problem solving under adult or peer guidance (Adey & Shayer, 1994).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

History of the Creative Dramatics Movement

Human beings have recognized the educational value of drama for over two thousand years, ever since Aristotle observed that audience members found themselves learning or inferring information as they watched plays in Grecian amphitheatres (O'Farrell, 1982). Modern educational drama, which emphasizes the process of spontaneous improvisation, is a little more than 80 years old and developed almost simultaneously in the United States and Great Britain as well as in certain parts of Europe (O'Farrell, 1982).

Creative dramatics in the United States developed out of the educational philosophies and experiments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These ideas were inspired by the notions of Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi who had lived a century earlier. While Pestalozzi himself did not use drama in his teaching, he placed importance on using the senses and language thus encouraging children to observe and to discuss what they learned (O'Farrell, 1982; Popovich, 1967).

According to Popovich (1967), Edward Sheldon, the head of the Normal School and Superintendent of the Public Schools of Oswego, New York in the late 1800s, was the first educator to emphasize creativity through the use of spontaneous activities which included drama in American classrooms. Sheldon adapted the elementary curriculum to the needs of the children by incorporating students' ideas and encouraging them to enact them. This idea has become a central tenet in the use of creative dramatics in the latter part of the twentieth century (O'Farrell, 1982).

In Chicago, during the first half of the twentieth century, the Francis W. Parker School was a pioneer as it successfully implemented precepts of educational philosophy propounded by Pestalozzi and Sheldon. The school used improvisational drama to promote oral expression and to acquaint children with world literature (O'Farrell, 1982; Popovich, 1967). When Flora Cooke became head of the Parker School she continued emphasizing projects which correlated with other subjects using drama techniques. John Merrill, another instructor in the Parker School, experimented with theories that became the bases of creative dramatics (Popovich, 1967). Merrill coauthored a book with Martha Fleming called Play-making and Plays between 1925 and 1930.

In 1896 John Dewey established his Laboratory School at the University of Chicago. He and his associates

undertook experimental work in child-centered education and advocated spontaneous activities for children in which drama was used frequently (O'Farrell, 1982; Popovich, 1967).

The "ultimate birthplace" of educational drama in the United States, according to O'Farrell (1982), was in and near Chicago. Around 1930 William Wirt instituted a number of educational initiatives in the schools of Gary, Indiana. Wirt organized schools according to three fundamental principles: Schools should provide opportunity for work, study, and supervised play for children; school facilities should be used to maximum efficiency; and children should be exposed to a varied and enriched curriculum (Popovich, 1967, pp. 119-120). His program for the schools emphasized the value of dramatic acting in the improvement of oral communication.

In the second quarter of the twentieth century Winifred Ward, working in Evanston, Illinois and at Northwestern University, made significant inroads in the development of creative dramatics (Popovich, 1967). It was Ward, in fact, who coined the term "creative dramatics" as the title for her first book published in 1930 (O'Farrell, 1982; Popovich, 1967). Ward's approach was to develop a method of story dramatization by using storytelling as a basis for her initial work. Ward established training programs in creative dramatics at Northwestern University

in the 1920s and 1930s and, in 1949, founded The Children's Theatre Conference which became the national organization for educational drama in the United States (O'Farrell, 1982; Shuman, 1978). Among Ward's many contributions to creative dramatics was the development of theory and methodology for including drama in education.

By 1955 the educational importance of creative dramatics grew to the point in which over 92 colleges or universities were offering at least one course devoted to the subject (Popovich, 1967, pp. 122-123).

One cannot do justice in recounting the history of creative dramatics without including the significant contributions of the work of educators from Great Britain. As in the United States, British educators were influenced to experiment in drama for education by the principles of Pestalozzi and the progressive education movement of Dewey (O'Farrell, 1982). Caldwell Cook, who pioneered methodology in the use of improvisational drama for teaching content and other subjects in Perse School, Cambridge, wrote The Play Way which was published in 1917 (O'Farrell, 1982). Cook's focus was on learning by doing, on spontaneity rather than on forced effort. His purpose was to foster an appreciation of literature in dramatic form in order to enable people to make informed decisions about social and economic problems.

Peter Slade, a post-World War II figure in British educational drama, summarized his observations about the significance of improvisational drama in his 1954 book called Child Drama (O'Farrell, 1982; Watkins, 1981). Slade believed that teachers should facilitate appropriate modes of dramatization at each stage in children's development.

In addition to the work of Slade, other educators contributed to the explosion of interest in the use of drama as an educative medium in Great Britain in the 1950s and 1960s (Watkins, 1981). Brian Way, who was the Director of the Theatre Center in London, taught inservice courses and worked with student teachers in developmental drama. Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton evolved their own approach to drama in education in which students were encouraged to use their own strengths and to build on their own experiences (Watkins, 1981). Heathcote, a teacher at Durham University who posited drama as a learning model, suggested that teachers be open to any dramatic method which would suit the needs of the group, even to the extension of improvisational drama into formal theatrical productions. This position runs contrary to most definitions of creative or educational drama in which process is emphasized over product.

O'Farrell (1982) suggested that the three most significant legacies left to educators in drama are those of Winifred Ward (drama that tells a story), Caldwell Cook

(drama which teaches concepts), and Peter Slade (drama which promotes the development of the total person) (p. 5). The concepts of these people overlap in many areas and are indicative of the diversity of current practice in creative dramatics.

Currently, most teachers of creative dramatics follow an eclectic approach, using ideas and methods that correspond with the needs of their students. The three approaches which form the legacies indicated above seem to be the ones most used. Story drama, developmental drama, and drama as a learning tool form the basis of most current practice (O'Farrell, 1982). O'Farrell noted that the resulting diversity in drama instruction means that teachers often defeat their own purposes when attempting to describe the educational value of drama for children (p. 7). It would seem that the value in understanding the historical underpinnings of creative dramatics comes from practitioners' being able to look at their own work objectively to determine their dominant philosophy and its relationship to other ideas.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The "Guidelines for Appropriate Curriculum Content and Assessment in Programs Serving Children Ages 3 through 8" (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1991) suggested that all educators have a belief system

whether explicit or implicit about how children learn and what they should be learning. "Theories are useful because they help teachers understand why they do what they do and explain why something happens" (p. 24). Cunningham (1992b) stated, "Holding a theoretical perspective means making a personal commitment to it, while recognizing the potential validity of other positions" (p. 157). The nature of learning should inform the practice of teaching.

Curriculum theory addresses questions about which knowledge is most important. "We cannot justify the content of what we teach solely on how children learn because the 'how' is more concerned with method" (p. 27).

Carter (1982) posited that once formulated, theory provides an extensive basis for experimental studies and further descriptive work and that any theoretical base has to be constantly validated and refined. Theory provides a basis for the rationale and design of later intervention and for descriptive studies (p. 26). A carefully developed rationale which is firmly based on theory is important in any study.

The dominant theoretical framework for this study comes from the ideas of Dewey (1934) as outlined in Art as Experience and from the constructivist theories of Vygotsky (1962, 1971).

Dewey: A Theory of Art in Education

Dewey (1934) stated that it is the task of the theorist to restore continuity between forms of art and everyday events that are universally recognized to constitute experience (p. 4). Theory is concerned with understanding and developing insight into phenomena.

"Theories which isolate art and its appreciation by placing them in a realm of their own disconnected from other modes of experiencing, are not inherent in the subject-matter but arise because of specifiable extraneous conditions" (p. 10) which are located in institutions and in habits of life. Dewey believed that all artistic endeavor needs to be a part of the normal process of living.

A philosophy of art is meaningless unless it makes people aware of art in relation to other ways of experiencing things. Artistic effort involves the interaction of human beings with their surroundings (Dewey, 1934, p. 15). Creative dramatics in concert with other aspects of the elementary school involve such interaction.

Theory can be based only on an understanding of the central role of energy within and without and of that interaction of energies which institutes opposition in company with accumulation, conservation, suspense, and interval, and cooperative movement toward fulfillment in an ordered, or rhythmical experience. (pp. 169-170)

Dewey's ideas both of theory and of art in education support the major strands of this study. One of the purposes of this research was to contribute to theory

concerned with understanding the phenomenon of creative dramatics in elementary education. Dewey's ideas about art involving the interaction of human beings with their environment sustain the tenets of creative dramatics as a component of performing arts.

Vygotsky: Constructivism

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), a Russian psychologist, suggested the necessity of studying the relationship between the intellect and the affective domain. He suggested that children's intellectual growth is contingent upon the mastery of the social means of thought, which is language. The process of language creation is analogous to the process of concept formation in the intellectual development of the child (1962, p. 75). The phases of concept formation, according to Vygotsky, include (a) syncretic imaging, which involves the union of opposing principles, (b) development of complexes, which are the bonding of various ideas, and (c) abstracting, which comprises the singling out of certain concepts and seeing them apart from the whole concrete experience in which they are located (1962, p. 76).

Vygotsky defined aesthetics as emotions which are free from association with practical interests (1971, p. 247). Artistic experiences enhance rather than detract from students' perceptions of reality. Vygotsky stated that the

act of artistic creation cannot be taught, but the educator can work cooperatively with the student in bringing it about (1971, pp. 256-267). He went on to state that "for the child there exists a psychological kinship between art and play" (p. 257). Adey and Shayer (1994) suggested that Vygotsky integrated aspects of social psychology with aspects of individual and cognitive psychology.

Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" is the distance between the actual developmental level determined individually and the potential developmental level determined by another person, teacher, or peer. In reference to Vygotsky's ideas Adey and Shayer (1994) suggested that an individual may develop extra intellectual power when involved in mediation through social interaction (p. 119). The role of the teacher is to organize the tasks for students in such a way that they will discover the problems inherent in the tasks. Later, the whole group shares insights and difficulties which cooperative groups have encountered. Since the ability of students to make competent decisions about their own learning varies, the teacher must be able to give varying amounts of guidance to them as the need arises (Winn, 1992, p. 180). These ideas, which constitute the essence of constructivist theory, would seem to fit easily hand-in-glove with the underlying framework for the use of creative dramatics with children.

Cunningham (1992a) stated, "Vygotsky's views are basic to the constructivist position" (p. 40). The constructivist theory sees the role of the teacher changing from the traditional view of authority figure who presents information to students to one of a partner in learning. Constructivists do not focus on giving ideas to the learner; instead, they attempt to develop the skills of the student to construct their own ideas in response to different situations (Duffy & Jonassen, 1992, p. 4). For students, reality is the desired outcome of the constructive process.

Merrill (1992) cited six basic assumptions of constructivism:

1. Knowledge is constructed from experience.
2. Learning is a personal interpretation of the world, not a reality shared with others.
3. Learning is an active rather than a passive experience.
4. Meaning is negotiated through collaborative work with others and from many differing perspectives.
5. Learning should occur in real-world settings.
6. Testing should be integrated into the learning process, not be seen as a separate activity (pp. 102-103).

Fosnot (1992) suggested that a constructivist approach to teaching identifies the strategies that will facilitate the construction of concepts and determines when these

strategies are needed. Understanding is not mastered, but it can always be increased through exposure to new experiences. Creative dramatics incorporates methodology which complements the constructivist view.

Related Theoretical Ideas

Creativity was defined by Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) as "constructive, productive behavior that can be seen in action or accomplishment" (p. 74) and "a way of thinking, not a specific skill" (p. 371). These authors went on to say,

The process of creation involves incorporating the self into the activity; the very act of creation provides understanding of the process that others go through in facing their own experiences. To live cooperatively as well-adjusted human beings and to contribute creatively to such a society become most important objectives for education (p. 18).

It may be difficult for children to learn to think creatively, according to Lowenfeld and Brittain, since they often look to others for a model to follow. "There is a risk involved in setting out on new and uncharted paths" (p. 379).

Osborne (1985) spoke of aesthetic education as an involvement in the expansion of our perceptual powers and cultivation of sensibilities which belong to direct understanding of the world in which we live (p. 84). The field of aesthetics, of the arts in general, and of drama in particular, is involved with the whole of life and of

experience. Aesthetic appreciation can be taught by example but cannot be either taught or learned by rote. It must be experienced because aesthetic thinking is non-verbal thinking.

Goldberg (1974) stated that on a theoretical level education involves four kinds of exposure to art: appreciation, performance, analysis, and sociological awareness (p. 344). Creative dramatics on a theoretical level involves a process for testing, evaluating, revising, and integrating ideas and may stimulate a confident and abundant flow of ideas (Moore & Caldwell, 1990).

Wright (1984) asserted that a number of theorists suggest that teachers of creative dramatics develop a clear, individual style based on taxonomies of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development. Analysis of current practice should lead to development of further theory of instruction for drama leaders (Wright, 1984, pp. 18, 22).

Rosenberg et al. (1982) suggested that often practitioners fail to develop a grounded approach to creative dramatics or to understand its theoretical and practical relationship to both theatre and to child development (p. 16). The researcher is able to stand outside the experience of creative dramatics and observe the participant, the leader, and the drama itself in addition to noting the interactions of all three. This

research stance aids in the formulation of new theory concerning the use of drama with children.

Bolton (1979) posited the notion that creative dramatics has the ability to elevate dramatic play to a level of symbolism that makes the work an artistic form (p. 74). One of the goals of drama education is to develop in each student a personal shift in value and in theoretical constructs.

Summary

Theoretical frameworks that support creative dramatics in the elementary school include the theory that art and everyday life are related and should not be isolated one from the other (Dewey, 1934) and constructivist theory which basically states that students construct their own learning with guidance from adults and peers (Vygotsky, 1962, 1971). This study sought to ascertain if there is a relationship between the use of a form of art, creative dramatics, the teaching of creative dramatics, and the training of teachers in creative dramatics. The intent was to contribute to a grounded theory concerning a basis for inclusion of creative dramatics in teacher education. The discovery of the interaction between the affective and the cognitive can contribute further to the use of creative dramatics in elementary education.

Creative Dramatics in Elementary Education

Teachers often have difficulty helping themselves and their students to see the connection among the various disciplines in schooling. This has resulted in a fragmentation of learning (Kronish & Abelmann, 1989). The arts can assist educators in finding integration across subject areas. Kronish and Abelmann contended that instruction in the arts should be developmental and sequential from elementary through secondary school with each year building on the teachings and learnings from previous experiences (p. 9). By studying the arts people may acquire a cultural record of the past and present in order to help put themselves and their value systems in proper perspective (pp. 5-6).

The Teaching of Creative Dramatics

Moore and Caldwell (1990) suggested that creative dramatics is a resource which is available to every classroom teacher. It has the potential to act as a simple, effective strategy for increasing students' motivation to learn. Goldberg (1974) concurred with this in asserting that in addition to creative dramatics' effect on children's motivation, it can also develop psychological values, encourage problem-solving competencies, help children acquire positive self-concepts, and teach them to accept differences in others (p. 15). Incidental benefits

of creative dramatics for children, according to Goldberg, include making school time relevant to everyday life, giving opportunity for socialization with others, providing enjoyable school experiences, allowing experiences with the spoken language during drama activities and in the discussions which follow, and motivating writing and other types of creative work (p. 87). Courtney (1988b) agreed that creative dramatics promotes social learning. The nature of dramatic play encourages a "wondering frame-of-mind" and leads to self-expression and new understanding, as well as cooperative interaction with others (Townsend, 1987, p. 15).

According to Wright (1984), the creative dramatics teacher needs to formulate a theory of instruction which involves developing appropriate drama activities for the group, facilitating individual and group involvement in those activities, and guiding individual understanding of the drama which is created from the activities. Whether teachers use a sequential program of dramatic activities or some other format, they must be well-versed in drama processes. This involves teachers acquiring the skill to choose appropriate situations in which to involve students in creative dramatics. Bolton (1979) was not optimistic about this possibility when he stated, "Given the present stage of teacher-training in drama and a general lack of understanding of education for values . . . many teachers

stand little chance of ever reaching this kind of goal" (p. 90).

Wright (1984) suggested four variables having an impact on elementary school drama lessons: the children's cognitive and social developmental level, the social and cultural context of the region, the culture of the school, and the teacher's role in the project (p. 21). Teachers of creative dramatics have an opportunity to involve children in the process of metacognition (thinking about thinking) and thus gain a measure of control over their own means of thought (Townsend, 1987, pp. 16-17).

The teaching of creative dramatics in the elementary school involves external action with actual context and make-believe context that evidences particularized internal action (Bolton, 1979). "In play and in drama there is obvious learning potential in terms of skills and objective knowledge, but the deepest kind of change that can take place is at the level of subjective meaning" (p. 31).

Characteristics which give an activity a dramatic orientation as opposed to mere play include (a) cooperative work, (b) congruency, which implies a compatibility between feeling and understanding, (c) ascendancy of group over personal levels of subjectivity, (d) and a feeling quality that goes beyond the emotion of daily living (Bolton, 1979, pp. 36-37).

Stages and Types of Drama

Bolton (1979) posited four stages toward change in understanding, which he saw as the goal of creative dramatics: (a) artificial drama, in which children feel but do not necessarily understand the drama experience; (b) reinforcement, where students can draw only on prior knowledge in order to create the knowledge; (c) clarification, in which drama reinforces concepts; and (d) modification, when the drama is at a level of experiential feeling in which understanding can take place (pp. 44-46). These four stages evolve into four types of dramatic activity. Type A, exercise, is characterized by a sense of purpose, repeatability, and well-defined rules. Type B, dramatic playing, is the opposite of Type A in that its mode is existential in nature and has fewer well-described features. Type C, theatre, emphasizes communication of a product to an audience. Type D, drama for understanding, combines the goals of children and teacher with purposeful dramatic play (pp. 52, 62). Those advocates who teach drama to children do not want children to escape from who they are, but to see themselves from new perspectives. Learning in drama develops growth in personal knowledge which coincides with Bolton's stated goal of drama as shift in value or in understanding.

Creative Dramatics in Language Arts

According to much of the literature, the most obvious place for drama in the elementary school is in the area of language arts. Interviewed in 1983 by Language Arts, Dorothy Heathcote asserted that through drama children can use and explore many different levels or styles of language from informal to formal ("Learning, Knowing, and Languaging in Drama," p. 701). Vawter and Vancil (1980) stated that creative dramatics can aid reading instruction in which the emphasis can be on having children act out stories. When children are self-directed through a drama process they find good reasons to read (Vawter & Vancil, 1980, p. 322).

Although apprehensive about initiating dramatic activities in her elementary class, McCormack (1992) found numerous possibilities for teaching reading and writing through the use of plays. By being allowed to make all of the decisions in the play performing process, students learned from each other about all aspects of play production from characterization, to ad libbing, to listening for cues (p. 472).

Juliebo (1990) affirmed the idea that students will use drama to generate ideas for written work. Drama activities will help them develop appropriate language use, develop questioning strategies and role playing skills, and develop respect for the rights and ideas of others.

Benninga and Crum (1982) suggested using children's literature in drama for the development of social understanding. Such activities may take place during the time already set aside for reading instruction and not only expose children to good literature but provide opportunity for interaction between the language arts and social studies (p. 147). Creative dramatics can aid in developing creative comprehension in which children view a whole story, examine the interrelationships of characters and events, and interpret characters' actions (Martin, Cramond, & Safter, 1982, p. 569).

Creative Dramatics in the Content Areas

Creative dramatics has the potential to be incorporated into many subjects other than the language arts. Hoyt (1992) proposed possibilities for the integration of the expressive arts into all subject areas. Objectives for integration of drama and content areas, according to Cottrell (1987), are (a) to implement holistic learning in which the whole being of the child--mind, body, and feelings--is involved in the process; (b) to provide experiential learning that draws on both sides of the brain; (c) to accommodate the preferred learning styles of children who learn best experientially; and (d) to provide interesting and useful content for dramatic work (p. 141).

Some examples of integrating drama in content areas which were suggested by Stewig (1983) include exploring rhythmic patterns in music and in math and studying explorers in history through spontaneous drama.

Kase-Polisini and Spector (1992) stated that creative dramatics has the possibility of being integrated with science in the elementary classroom. These authors suggested numerous similarities between science and drama. Both subject areas involve action and problem solving. Science and creative dramatics facilitators encourage learning through discovery. Through the use of open-ended questions, teachers of both disciplines help students construct knowledge built on prior learnings (p. 18). Creative dramatics can help students discover scientific concepts that explain the world around them (Brizendine & Thomas, 1982; Monroe, 1990).

Drama can provide a doorway to the past (Nelson, 1988). In social studies creative dramatics has the ability to help students to focus attention on historical events, to understand human reactions, and to retain important concepts (Brizendine & Thomas, 1982). Along with traditional activities in social studies, such as textbook reading or paper and pencil assignments, Birdsong (1989) saw the opportunity for using multicultural experiences in plays dealing with a variety of issues such as race relations or cultural diversity.

Other Uses for Creative Dramatics

Creative dramatics can be used as a helping technique in elementary classrooms (Kenny, 1987). Since drama often brings a release from tension for participants, it may be useful in both diagnosis and therapy for children with emotional disorders. In addition to having a sound base of understanding in drama, the practitioner of drama therapy must be well-versed in therapeutic techniques (p. 35).

Another place creative drama has in the elementary school is in providing opportunities for children of diverse intellectual abilities to work and play together. "The arts provide a common meeting ground for students of differing intellectual abilities" (Haeny, 1989, p. 35). When special education and gifted teachers work together to plan dramatic activities, students have the chance to develop friendships among both groups.

Summary

To summarize, the literature offered ample evidence that creative dramatics has an important place in the elementary curriculum. Nelson (1988) stated, "Drama provides the medium through which practice and extension of language can occur within a meaningful context" (p. 22). Opportunities in creative dramatics exist for experience and growth in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains and can even affect test scores positively (Grunko

& Hilsenrad, 1990, p. 11). Creative dramatics offers a dimension of knowing that can help children learn much information in many curricular and personal areas (Bolton, 1979).

Teaching Processes Used in Creative Dramatics

Petrilli (1986, p. 12) suggested three questions teachers ask about using creative dramatics in the classroom:

1. How do I do this with a classroom full of children?
2. Where do I find the time and space?
3. What do I do if the children are uncooperative?

There is no one best way for teachers to proceed with creative dramatics. Through experience and patience teachers will find what works best in a given situation. Teachers should be open, non-judgmental, non-critical, and supportive of students' efforts. Improvisation is the primary technique suggested, preceded and followed by discussions that lead children into the activity and help them evaluate their experience (Petrilli, 1986).

Vawter and Vancil (1980) asserted that the teacher has to believe in children's ability to direct themselves and has to trust that students will solve problems and work

with each other with a minimum of intercession of the teacher. Fowler (1988) said that teachers of drama should have expertise in both creative dramatics and in teaching as a prerequisite to excellence (p. 60). "Anyone who stands in front of a classroom day after day knows a great deal about performance" (Yaffe, 1989, p. 32).

Collins (1985) stated that people come to know the world through the use of various symbolic systems, such as language, mathematics, science, the visual arts, or drama. Each system provides students with a different aspect of the world. "The truly educated person may be described as one who has mastered the widest range of symbol systems possible" (p. 3). To become literate in any symbol system, regardless of what it might be, has significant cognitive benefits. Collins went on to say that creative dramatics provides students with ideas about the world and about themselves just as reading and writing provide a means of exploring the world (p. 4). Collins said, "It is only by being given frequent opportunities to observe, and participate in, dramatic activity that children can develop a dramatic sense" (p. 4). What is important is that children have an opportunity to explore the world through dramatic experiences, not that all children become experts at dramatic processes.

Sequence of Creative Dramatics

Many authors advocated a sequential program of creative dramatics in the elementary classroom (Cottrell, 1987; Gangi, 1990; List, 1982; Piggins, 1984; Stewig, 1983). While each author may propose a slightly different way of organizing the activities, generally the sequence includes the following:

- imaginative thinking and problem solving
- movement activities
- pantomime
- spatial awareness of self and of others
- sensory awareness and recall
- verbalization--imitative sound, moods, feelings
- choral reading
- readers' theatre
- characterization
- acting out analogies
- story drama
- plot development
- play reading
- play performance

The value of a program of creative dramatics for children, according to Cottrell (1987), is that it has the ability to engage children in holistic education which involves all facets of what it means to be a whole person: mind, body, emotions, challenges, and the cognitive, physical, affective, social, and aesthetic needs (p. 9).

The Role of the Teacher

Shoop (1986) asserted that the teacher of creative dramatics must train students using instructional procedures which lead them from what they know to what they do not know. Teachers have a responsibility to create a

dramatic climate in the classroom by encouraging and supporting students, establishing trust, fostering mutual respect, serving as a role-model, and engaging in active listening (Cottrell, 1987, pp. 16-19). Cottrell further suggested that the drama teacher has numerous jobs which include helping students develop appropriate attitudes, stating objectives for dramatic work, organizing and managing drama activities, developing audience skills, coaching the activities, role-playing, using effective questioning strategies, and employing competent story telling (pp. 20-36).

Group Process in Creative Dramatics

McClure, Miller, and Russo (1992) listed five stages of which teachers should be aware in dealing with group processes in creative drama: "forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning" (p. 268). These authors suggested that drama can be an effective means of helping children deal with conflicts that arise when they work in groups. Some strategies for resolving conflict in which creative dramatics may play a role include the use of fantasy, role playing, physical movement, and direct expression of conflicted feelings. Conflict in drama is good, according to McClure et al., and can provide a medium for expression of feelings that might be lost in an attempt to verbalize them.

The rest of this section deals with some specific ways in which the processes of creative dramatics may be of use in the elementary classroom.

Pantomime

Mountain (1986) stated that pantomime can be of help in teaching children who have difficulties in learning to read. Pantomime can help children develop their powers of creativity and to use "body-English" for projecting ideas (p. 6). This drama activity can help students by allowing them to release their creativity and by improving their self-image.

Choral Reading

According to McCauley and McCauley (1992), choral reading never fails to excite children's interest in reading. Students benefit by gaining an appreciation for literature, improving diction, increasing interest in literature and in reading, improving self-confidence, increasing fluency of reading, and expanding vocabulary (p. 527). McCauley and McCauley suggested the following steps in developing a choral reading activity:

- Introduce the poem.
- Read the poem to the class.
- Give the poem to the children and read it to them as they read along.
- Read the poem with the children.
- Assign solos and group lines.
- Practice the work.
- Perform the poem for others. (p. 531)

The authors stated that "cognitive aspects cannot be separated from the affective aspects of learning" (p. 532). Choral reading provides a way for the whole class to engage in a reading/dramatic activity regardless of the variation in proficiency of reading among class members.

Story Drama

According to Verriour (1990), the chief storyteller in the classroom is the teacher. As students travel through the school system they have less and less opportunity for initiating their own storytelling. Verriour asserted that storytelling and story drama fulfill a role in allowing children to internalize and verbalize personal experiences, construct meaning, and communicate feelings. As part of improvised drama, story drama involves students in the sharing of personal stories and requires them to work together to create a new story based on the ideas of everyone in the group. San Jose (1988) suggested that story drama helps children relate the literature they study to other stories.

"Story drama is virtually nonfail, even from the first" (San Jose, 1988, p. 32). The children may meet in groups to solve the problems posed in a story and take on the roles of different characters in a story. At each stage of the drama children have the opportunity to share new insights.

Verriour (1990) stated that at the onset the teacher is in control of what is happening even though the students make individual choices. As the story drama progresses children learn to work cooperatively to find other stories which are inside the first story (pp. 146-147).

Story drama can be combined with other drama process such as pantomime or readers' theatre and as children become more experienced in the process, they can make more of the decisions as to how to proceed (San Jose, 1988).

Other Creative Drama Activities

Manna (1984) stated that "play reading can encourage children to become aware of the connection between print and spoken language" (p. 712). Manna attested to the value of this process by suggesting that children are stimulated to pay close attention to details and helped to develop language skills which are basic to interpretive reading.

Paul (1991) advised creative drama teachers to have children devise play productions which include music and dance. Drama provides a multi-disciplinary, multi-sensory approach to language arts that facilitates the learning process and the ability to express ideas (p. 310).

Way (1981) said that when young children attend a play that is well-done, they participate with "mind, heart, and spirit" (p. 2). Children's vocal and physical reactions form the basis of audience participation in children's

theatre and help the children feel that they are part of the play. This brings more meaning to the experience and provides opportunity for creative responses.

Past Research in Creative Dramatics

As previously stated, creative dramatics has been in use in numerous classrooms throughout the United States since the beginning of the twentieth century. Numerous claims were made concerning the effects of creative dramatics on personality development and academic achievement, but it was not until the mid 1960s that any experimental research was done to substantiate these claims (Kardash & Wright, 1987, p. 11).

Kardash and Wright conducted a meta-analysis (a statistical analysis of summary findings) of a number of empirical studies, covering nearly 20 years, which investigated the effects of various creative dramatics programs with elementary students. The results of this analysis demonstrated that creative dramatics activities have a moderate, positive effect on elementary students' achievement in a variety of areas such as oral language skills, self-esteem, and moral reasoning skills, plus a beneficial effect on the development of dramatic skills (p. 17).

Skeptics concerned with claims about the value of creative dramatics note a scarcity of empirical evidence to

support assertions for the benefit of drama activities for students (Massey & Kolziol, 1978). Massey and Kolziol suggested that prior to 1978 research in creative dramatics contained far too few concrete descriptions of actual procedures, but the research laid a foundation of support for the positive impact of creative dramatics on language development.

Vitz (1983) stated, "Research in drama is characterized by being a one-time only event, such as a doctoral degree dissertation" (p. 23). Education systems concerned with accountability need research to add credence to the claims of the benefits of creative dramatics. If creative dramatics is to be proven important in education it is essential to compare the effectiveness of different methods and teaching styles and to ascertain which are more productive (p. 24). Making a case for further research in drama, Vitz said, "A closer, more objective examination of the process and outcomes of teaching drama can only serve to improve the art while increasing its stature in the eyes of the educational community" (p. 24).

A variety of research endeavors characterizes scholarly inquiry in the area of creative dramatics. Some areas of study include the effect of creative dramatics on language development in children and elementary principals' ideas about the use of creative dramatics in their schools.

These topics and others are discussed in the following sections.

Stewig's Research

Stewig, long active in the field of creative dramatics, conducted a number of research studies. A discussion of some of his work follows.

Stewig (1984) surveyed 346 teachers concerning whether or not they used creative dramatics in their classrooms and what, if any, benefit they felt it had for their students. Seventy-five percent felt that creative dramatics was important for children, but only 25% actually used the process in their classrooms. Another study showed that of 319 teachers 70% spent less than 5% of their language arts time on creative dramatics (p. 27).

In recounting another study, Stewig and Vail (1985) stated that despite the advocates of creative dramatics, experiences in this area are not a regular part of most curricula. Teachers seemed enthusiastic about drama but allowed little time for its inclusion in their classrooms. Stewig and Vail said, "If research documentation were available, more teachers might include creative drama as part of their curricula" (p. 261). Their study involved seventh graders in Racine, Wisconsin and replicated two other studies in which Stewig was involved. After being given a pretest, 32 students in an experimental group were

exposed to 20 lessons integrating creative drama with language arts. The pretest involved having each student recount a familiar fairy tale for taping. Forty students in a control group were also pretested, but drama was not included as part of their language arts experience. At the close of the study all students involved were tested again in the same manner as before. There was no difference between the control and experimental groups in the actual number of words produced in telling a story; the growth was significant for each group. The length of sentences grew more in the control group than in the drama group. There was equal language diversity between the two groups. The overall results showed that the group exposed to creative drama performed no worse than did the control group (p. 264). The researchers suggested that the drama group might have performed better had the teachers had adequate training. Stewig and Vail concluded, "Time can be taken from the regular language arts program and given to drama without adverse effect in the development of students' oral language" (p. 264).

Stewig (1986a) asserted that since principals of schools are frequently seen as the most important factor in determining the nature of instructional programs, if they were to support a particular educational idea, teachers would be more likely to implement it (p. 15). In this study, Stewig sought to interview principals from eight

different school systems, including 19 public and one private school. Stewig wished to ascertain their knowledge of and interest in creative dramatics as an instructional program. Nearly half of the principals felt that teachers' lack of training in the field of drama may play a role in whether or not it is included as a regular part of the school day (p. 17). Stewig found that principals often did not see informal drama as helpful in improving their school's measurable performance, although they did see creative dramatics as valuable in other ways.

Schools seldom measure creativity or self-expression, partly because it is difficult to find reliable tests. Stewig (1986a) asserted that if tests of that sort were administered, creative dramatics would stand a better chance of becoming an essential part of the educational life of children (p. 18). "Inclusion of such activities . . . is really a matter of making the educational experience equitable for all students" (p. 18).

A final example of a research project Stewig (1986b) conducted involved factors influencing how much or how little classroom teachers used creative dramatics with their students. One significant factor was the type of preparation teachers have for conducting drama activities. Stewig stated that in some undergraduate programs every elementary major must complete a drama course as a requirement for graduation. In other teacher education

programs drama courses are optional. One consistently required class in elementary education programs is a methods course in language arts. Stewig stated that for many future teachers any information they receive concerning creative dramatics is learned in this course (p. 20). For this study, he surveyed 21 college language arts texts and found that the most information devoted to creative dramatics in a textbook was 11%; the least amount was .1% of one of the books. These percentages translated into 63 of 561 pages for the former, and 2.5 of 427 pages for the latter (p. 20). Stewig found the topics most covered in language arts texts were puppets, creative dramatics, pantomime, dramatics, and dramatic activities (p. 21). Stewig stated that the survey of the texts did not answer the question of the quality of the material presented, but it seemed clear from this survey that most classroom teachers learn about creative dramatics in a language arts course rather than in a specialized course.

Language Arts Research

The most common link in research on creative dramatics is with language arts. In a reading comprehension research project, DuPont (1992) determined that using creative dramatics as an instructional strategy to enhance reading comprehension warrants recognition and continued investigation.

