

Educational Drama: One Teacher's Search for Significance

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B.Ed. University of Alberta, 1979

A THESIS IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR

THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS

IN

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Department of Language Education)

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

August 1991

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Date August 1991

ABSTRACT

This study describes the journey of one teacher and her students through a year of change in thinking about, planning and implementing the secondary drama program. The change occurred as a result of a six-week summer course which I took in 1990, with leading drama theorist, Gavin Bolton. In September, 1990, I began to use the methodology and theory presented by Bolton in my own secondary drama program for Grade Eight, Nine and Ten students. The data for the study came from the student journals, teacher/researcher observation, interviews, samples of student writing-in-role and post-unit evaluative strategies collected throughout this year of transition. The results indicate that the change of methodology had an impact on the perceived learning outcomes for both students and teacher. As well, strong evidence surfaced to support my belief that teaching drama in this manner has benefits which may not be easily achieved by other means. This study was written for teachers and students in the belief that both may find a more significant learning experience through the use of educational drama.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This journey has been graced by many encounters with special people.

Thank you...

Dr. Patrick Verriour, for your own vision.

Dr. Jean Barman, for your guiding questions.

Dr. Carl Leggo, for your enthusiasm for journeys.

Susann Baum, for sharing the steps.

Albert Murphy, for steady winds.

1. Background to the Study

To embark on a journey with a destination in mind is exciting and enticing, but fairly predictable. To begin a journey whose outcome is unclear but inviting is an adventure. People undertake adventures when the reality of their lives becomes too predictable, too staid. A great number of professional educators take short trips, but substantially fewer actually ready themselves for a journey, especially if they know that there may be no reason to return to their present location. However, recent trends in educational thinking encourage educators to discover many new ideas, methodologies, and challenges in the world of teaching, and change is within reach, for drama educators particularly.

Drama education seems to be a term which is clear and uncomplicated. A gentle probe beneath the surface, however, reveals a multiplicity of questions, conflicting theories and confused, ungrounded practices. The ambiguity which surrounds the study and teaching of drama exists for several reasons:

- 1) it is a creative art, whose form is naturally transitional;
- 2) it is a relative infant on the curricular agenda;

- 3) a single approach has yet to be presented which can be agreed upon by the majority of practitioners;
- 4) a significant absence of communication exists between theorists and practitioners; and
- 5) teacher training institutes are negligent and tardy in exploring and endorsing a wider range of specific approaches.

How can drama teachers continue to build on the foundation set by the drama pioneers of the second half of this century? It seems to me that the only possible way for educational drama to continue to exist is by shifting the balance regarding learning objectives. For some time the trend in drama education has been to move unquestioningly toward a primarily skills-based curriculum. It has been suggested that drama become an examinable subject, with rigid criteria to be met. This is, of course, a long way from the enervating chaos of the late sixties and early seventies when individual expression, at any cost, was the choice. However, the skills-based only approach may lead to a chaos of its own.

Before too many radical moves are made, it might be useful to assess what is right about the many techniques and theories that currently exist, and perhaps, to discover a way to meld them more closely to find the right

fit for the coming decades.

This study results from my increasing dissatisfaction with the nature and quality of the work displayed by my secondary drama students. I grew tired of the repetitive theatre games which, while amusing, led nowhere. In improvisation, the students felt compelled to demonstrate Hollywood mimicry and soap-opera dramatics. Work with text at this level (Grade Eight, Nine and Ten) had no relation to sincere understanding of subtext or intention, simply relying on articulation and oral reading ability. However, no matter how shallow I perceived the efforts to be, the students seemed to have an insatiable appetite for the ludicrous and insignificant. Sadly, none of the numerous workshops I attended, the material I swapped with drama colleagues, or the too-brief annual Drama Teacher's Conference provided the answers I was seeking. I wanted something that could go beyond exercises and group entertainment. I discovered through this study that what I was sensing as missing in my lessons was context. Cecily O'Neill (1989) in comments regarding British drama education states:

We've begun to move away from... short-term, fragmented exercises and sensory experiences. Now drama teachers are aiming to set up work which will

allow for the growth of the significant context in which meaning may be negotiated. (p.211)

I enrolled at the University of British Columbia in pursuit of a remedy - a tonic - which would return vitality and validity to my teaching. As part of my program of studies I completed a six-week summer course with noted British scholar, Gavin Bolton. The experience of this single class provided me with the framework I needed to return to my classroom with a renewed spirit of certainty that it was possible to teach drama in a significant, highly participatory way. The new approach drove this entire study and will receive elaboration throughout the document.

Purpose of the study

The intention of this study is to describe the journey I began with my students in September, 1990, with the desired outcome being an affirmation that drama teachers have choices to make in designing their programs. One of the most desired objectives is that teachers will finish reading this paper and exclaim, "I could do that!" There is a great need for continued exploration of the way drama is used in the classroom. To date little attention has been given to the kind of reflective practices

theorists have long agreed are essential to drama work, although a recent study by Harpe (1991) addresses the student's perspective. My focus is on how I as teacher/learner made changes in my thinking as we travelled through the year, and how the noticeable evidence of change was seen by both students and myself. The possibility exists for any drama teacher to utilize techniques and philosophy which encourage meaning which is significant to the students.

Educational Significance

An insightful commentary on the attitude of many of today's students is made by Eisner (1979) when he says:

The major task in schooling for many students is to discover just what they need to do in order to get through at a level of performance they regard as acceptable for themselves. (p.60)

Opportunities exist for drama teachers to help students push their levels higher.

Usually, when a Grade Eight student enrolls in secondary school drama, a set of expectations exists, even though that student may have little prior drama experience. When asked to say what they think drama might be about, they most frequently reply, 'acting'. This

single response is the key, or the barrier that faces the drama teacher. Regardless which methodology a teacher uses, educational drama or 'actor-training', students must be eased into the subject in a cooperative manner, so that more than superficial results will develop. Without fail, novice students expect to be asked to 'perform'.

Contemporary students are consumers of incredibly effective marketing. Many students idolize movie stars, listen to music which has become as much visual as audible, and read magazines which are heavily fashion oriented. This adolescent group is barraged with information dictating social norms outside of their power to resist. They are display some deficiencies in the areas of reading, critical thinking, self-esteem, group skills, and oral language ability. In a society which reveres the fleeting and glamorous, it is not difficult to grasp why students would want to emulate the 'stars' they are inundated with everyday. This view of success is perpetrated by teachers whose artistic view is guided by the latest American stage hit.

The current British Columbia Drama Curriculum Guide evades the fundamental concepts of what is dramatic. With its ultimate intention to produce the student actor, it dictates a diet of fragmented, isolated exercises, taught

without a context. Not only does this approach fall short of success, it also leaves inexperienced teachers bewildered by its brevity and eventually subjected to a state of inertia. The recent popularity of Keith Johnstone's Theatre Sports technique has had the effect of providing teachers with recipe cards for survival in the classroom. There are some observations to be made on what a steady diet of such activity promotes. Barker (1986) comments:

The major limitation is that (as in children's play) delight is the reward for playing, and the actor, given the choice, usually takes the comic path rather than the tragic. This makes the performance very enjoyable, but limits the area of articulation of the human condition. (p.231)

It is only by peeling away the layers of the human condition that art begins to be revealed.

The vital link which can bring students in touch with their learning is content explored in context. Eisner (1979) explains:

To discern what an event means requires an understanding of the context in which it occurs; that context requires not only some knowledge of the people involved and the circumstances within which

the event occurs, but in many situations something about the past, against which the particulars of the present can be placed. (p.222)

The Province of British Columbia Ministry of Education Curriculum Guides suggest that Trust, Concentration, Observation, and Imagination are suitable areas of study. I believe that while these elements are essential to the whole picture, they must develop as a product of other explorations, not as ends in themselves. As Bolton (1985) states: "Learning in drama is essentially a reframing. What knowledge a student has is placed in a new perspective" (p. 156).

The present British Columbia Drama Curriculum is based on a developmental model, formulated largely by Brian Way in the 1960's. Generally, his intention was to further the 'growth of the individual' in an educational environment, to utilize an arsenal of exercises and games to evoke a sense of structure in the lesson, and to emphasize sensory awareness, or direct experience for the students. This approach is sequential in nature, assuming that students can acquire a set of skills at one grade level, then develop other skills at subsequent levels and emerge at the end 'fully developed'. This method is, at best, drawn sketchily in the current curriculum, and

leaves teachers without material after perhaps three months' work. I needed to find a model for my future teaching which would sustain my interest, challenge me intellectually, and above all, permit the very best quality of work from the students I would work with in years to come.

Specifically, I desired my students to display a greater sense of commitment, an understanding of dramatic art, greater integrity toward in-depth discovery and, most importantly, confidence in their own ability to create drama and share the meanings of their worlds. It has become increasingly important to me to find a more significant way to explore creativity, both in the students and myself, through the dramatic art form. In essence, "the teacher is attempting to match the child's existing experience of play to the less familiar forms of theatre in order to focus and deepen the child's learning experience" (Neelands, 1984, p.7). It is our responsibility as educators to find fresh ways of framing the work to enhance opportunities for learning.

In the same way, it is important for new research to be framed in fresh ways to make the process and the results clear and accessible for the intended audience, in this case, teachers. This study evolved in a qualitative

way because the very nature of drama is essentially reflective and progressive. I quote Eisner (1979) again for the clarity in the rationale:

There is no area of human inquiry that epitomizes the qualitative more than artists do when they work...Artists inquire in a qualitative mode both in the formulation of ends and the use of means to achieve such ends. (p.216)

Limitations

The limitations of the study stem from its ability only to report one person's move toward a holistic method of drama teaching. Thus the study can only provide insights into the benefits perceived by this teacher and her students. Yet, because of its personal voice, I hope that my experience will resonate for other teachers who may see similarities to their own experience in my journey. This description is not a guidepost, but a chronicle; not a prescription, but a possibility.

The study was restricted to one school year and, therefore, examines only initial responses to the changes. A future study could look at long term development and progress in one group of students.

The position of teacher as researcher also

incorporated teacher as learner. While the study was ongoing throughout the year, my responsibilities were twofold: both acquiring the data and functioning as a teacher using an entirely new methodology. Since both areas were new to me, the level of expertise may be questionable. Neither teacher nor students had had previous experience with the material.

I am sufficiently established in the school to have my personal standards and expectations recognized and unchallenged. A bias may exist in the perceptions of the students toward an undertaking approached enthusiastically by me.

In summary, I decided to make changes to my teaching style because I no longer believed that the work I was doing had integrity or that to continue on the same path would lead to an increased understanding of either myself, my students or the art form. In order to move into the future with confidence, teachers need to feel free to break away from some of the traditional ways of thinking and prepare to proceed with open minds. Benjamin (1989) writes:

Society's needs of the population will demand active-learning, higher cognitive skills, past-present-future focus, service learning, lifelong

learning, wholeperson education, coping with diversity, general education, transdisciplinary education, personalized learning, a process approach, and education for communication. (pp.8-12)

If we can look at drama as a composite of all these parts, then drama teachers are well-poised to move ahead.

Definition of terms

The following terms in the field of drama in education are presented in condensed form for the purposes of this study.

Dramatic play: The dramatic playing mode occurs at the experiential end of the dramatic action continuum. It is in this medium that the participant examines events as they are actually occurring.

Performance mode: The performance mode lies at the opposite end of the dramatic action continuum. The purpose is to demonstrate a particular perspective to an audience, usually of co-learners.

Theatre elements: It is the manipulation of time space and action which creates symbols and clarifies meaning. Theatre elements are integral to educational drama.

Educational drama: Educational drama engages the participants in a wide range of activities with the intention of exploring human situations. The collective experience of the participants leads to the creation of new meanings and understanding. The focus of the work lies in the change in understanding created by the experience, which is shaped by a careful selection of the elements of the art form.

Dramatic action: Dramatic action examines a narrow aspect of content deeply. The purpose is to explore symbolic not literal meanings to extract universal meanings. It takes place in the present, but draws from the fictitious situation and the imagination of the learners to bring new understanding to the participants.

Context: Any content area can offer a wide variety of experiences and perspectives. It is the particular angle or aspect that the teacher chooses to examine that forms the context of that drama. Learning areas such as meanings or subtext are the teacher's priority. Student involvement is concerned with the development of the practical details of that context.

Teacher in role (TIR): A device which places the teacher in the dramatic activity alongside the students. From this position, the teacher can evoke, through negotiation, the direction of the drama by drawing on the contributions of the students.

Tableaux (depiction): A still image created by the selective use of the art form which clarifies meaning of an event or idea.

Reflection: A process integral to the understanding of the ideas explored in the drama and how they relate to the individual. Reflection can and should occur at numerous points in the drama.

Playbuilding: The development of a single theme relevant to the participants. A collective piece of work is created through the use of dramatic conventions to convey multiple perspectives on the theme.

Role playing: Individuals or groups agree to adhere to the social conventions of a particular place and time to encounter an experience pertaining to the theme.

Reflections on the summer of 1990

In May, 1990, it was suggested to teaching colleague and fellow student Susann Baum and I, that we enrol in Gavin Bolton's summer drama course. This was to be a course for graduate students only, presumably ones with experience in role drama. We were unaware, at the time, of the real content of the course; we had both heard of Bolton, but in our ignorance had pigeon-holed him as most closely associated with elementary drama.

As the essence of Gavin Bolton's work began to reveal itself to us over the six weeks of the course, we underwent a tremendously powerful shift in thinking. Our initial scepticism before beginning the course was almost acerbic, in fact, certain colleagues had even gone so far as to query in puzzled tones why we would "go in for that sort of thing"! It was not until the first week of class had passed that the jolt of recognition occurred. This was indeed going to have a significant impact on our teaching styles. Even beyond that, our teaching paradigm was about to be injected with the vitality we were seeking, and a sense of destiny permeated the energy with which we set in to tackle the assignments presented to us.

It was essential for us to have had the chance to be Bolton's students, in that we experienced the detailed

expertise he demonstrated in the simplest of lessons. The moments of sheer joy which sparkled as we struggled and succeeded to solve a problem he set for us were frequent. I became impatient for the time when I could provide similar challenges for my students. He cleverly gave us what his own books and articles could never quite articulate with such clarity: a way to imprint the moments on ourselves. He made the material personally meaningful.

As each day passed, the urge to absorb as much as possible was strong. I have never taken more notes, or followed more intently, the content of any course - there was always a feeling of anticipation about what would be shared next. Like a child finding treasure I wanted to stuff all my pockets for the future as insurance for the time when I would have to strike out on my own.

In retrospect the summer proved somewhat disconcerting for me. While I was certainly ready to embrace a new way of teaching, and particularly one which had now proven itself to be of considerable credibility and value, I was nervous about how much material I was carrying around that now had to now be "unlearned". I knew that Bolton was providing all the fundamental background I would need to make the change, yet it was difficult to finally just say, "I will commit myself and my students to

trying it this way for a whole year, whatever happens and no matter how frustrated I get."

Gavin Bolton's conviction in his work inspired each of us in the course to challenge our ways of thinking about drama. Discovering the many significant ways of engaging the students in relevant material was exhilarating. I was surprised at how strongly I was now personally committed to this approach to drama teaching, but I recognized that for the first time, I had within reach a drama teaching methodology whose essence enables learners and knowing.

2. Literature Review

This chapter is a review of the literature related to the study and examines the views about drama in education as it relates to curriculum planning and thinking. The main purpose is to highlight the contributions drama can make to education when taught in this manner.

There has not been a vast body of theory developed on the subject of drama education, and what does exist has been formulated and shaped by a handful of theorists worldwide. However, from early in the first half of this century, those who have contributed to the field have done so passionately, not always with acute clarity to the layperson, but with integrity. Fortunately, each decade has added a new layer to the common understanding of what it is that drama accomplishes.

The thread which weaves through twentieth century drama theory is succinctly traced by Gavin Bolton (1984). His use of the term 'pioneers' includes Finlay-Johnson, Caldwell Cook, Peter Slade, Brian Way and Dorothy Heathcote. It is those individuals whose work will provide the foundation for twenty-first century developments. The premise which links all of these people is that the child has something to offer to the experience, whatever it

might be. As the thinking of one generation merged with the next, the fabric became richer and the texture more dense, each new length adding value to the whole.

A concise review of the contributions made by drama practitioners to the late 1970's is presented by Bolton (1984). Serious readers should consult the texts of the various theorists to gain a thorough foundation of the history of drama education.

Where does present day drama belong on the historical continuum? A move afoot in Great Britain would place drama in the company of examinable subjects. Davis (1984) describes the situation as a contradiction, saying:

At the very time when it should be possible to make a leap forward on the basis of the enormous contribution from Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton over the last twenty to thirty years, and when the position the young are in demands creativity and invention, we have instead, a whole trend back to theatre arts of the worst sort. (p.15)

Surely, we can see an opportunity here in Canada not to follow those in Britain who are supporting this approach.

The pedagogical model presented by Bolton and Heathcote addresses the concerns of modern educators with great clarity. In implementing this approach in the

secondary classroom, I discovered devices which help the students understand material more successfully, as well as how to become a better teacher. The most striking concept of the work is that the elements of the theatre are always present and must be judiciously and selectively implemented from within the dramatic events being explored. The sharpest division between understanding the work done by drama practitioners like Bolton and that of theatre-arts proponents who malign the method lies in the emphasis placed on the importance of the dramatic event over the technical skills of acting. Bolton (1986) states:

Of course we want young people to develop skills in theatre, but the firmest foundations for such skills derive from training the director's/playwright's eye and ear, and in the discipline of ensemble playing.

(p.371)

A tendency toward the 'academic' has made some of the writings of Bolton somewhat inaccessible to the average teacher, an unfortunate gap in the education of many. My personal experience was that, once having taken the course with Gavin, rereading his work was far easier to understand. I felt that his unique ability as a teacher came through much more profoundly in the classroom.

Even in the simplest of lessons, Bolton displayed

highly detailed planning. Tiny moments had been pre-thought and alternative actions readied for possible use throughout the lessons. Certainly some of the direction taken in class must have been instinctive and spontaneous, but it was the acute attention to detail that elicited the deepest responses in the students.

As pointed out by Hornbrook (1989), it was Bolton and Heathcote who dominated drama pedagogy throughout the 1980's. It is precisely because these scholars constantly evaluate and push the boundaries of their own theories that their contribution to current thinking is so valuable. Indeed, it is clear that the shift in Bolton's thinking to include multiple constructs of the 'performance mode' makes it much easier for former naysayers to begin a discovery of this methodology.

In his categorization of drama into four types, Bolton manages to include all forms of drama, but places greatest importance on drama as a vehicle for learning about content. Briefly, these categories are: A. Drama as Learning about Content; B. Drama as Personal Development; C. Drama as Social Development; and D. Drama for Learning about Dramatic Art Form. This classification does not at any time exclude the relevance of theatre elements and techniques. Indeed these qualities are integral to

understanding why this methodology is optimal for current trends in education, not just drama education.

Benefits to students taught through an educational drama approach are numerous. The approach makes easier the need Graham (1986) sees to "develop a curriculum relevant to the needs of its clients, not its masters".

According to Morgan and Saxton (1985) drama experiences provide opportunities for the exploration of language. Not only can the teacher model appropriate language strategies through teacher-in-role, but they can stimulate 'language occasions' to develop style, language, tone, logic and content. Again, the experiences of the students are directly linked to the skill the teacher displays with the approach, because, "the more roles a teacher can play in a drama, the more opportunities the students have for playing roles within the same situation; the more occasions there are for students to play the same role in different situations, the richer the language becomes" (p. 40).

O'Neill and Lambert (1982) also note the provision for challenging student language resources, primarily in the areas of developing student competence in handling description, instruction, logical reasoning, persuasion and planning. Verriour (1986) agrees, indicating that when

students are in the performance mode, "they are expected to engage in dialogue that is clear in referential intent to the audience as well as the other participants in the drama" (p.256).

Dramatic activity relies heavily on socializing behaviour which has been both a strong point for supporters and a target for detractors of drama education from the beginning. Too much emphasis on the development of the individual's individuality leads to chaos, while not enough makes the experience meaningless and sterile. However, meaningful group efforts often encourage students to find what Bolton refers to as a 'public voice', one which can be tested in a protected environment. This group structuring helps foster common conceptual understandings of the world and life, or 'universals'. Neelands (1984) also seeks this collective view which at the same time encourages individual expression within the larger community, one which has already agreed not to settle for the middle ground without considering each person's contribution. O'Neill (1989) agrees with this when she states that a group in a drama lesson has to both 'expect' and 'respond' to situations. This pattern requires the student to 'read' the roles around them and discover clues about themselves and the situation, and reflect on

themselves from both inside and outside the drama.

The strength of drama is its ability to provide these multiple perceptions for students which, in turn, empowers them. O'Neill (1989) states the objective clearly: "We are aiming to create imagined worlds with our students and encourage them to perceive themselves as world makers" (p.211). Surely, this is one of the acquisitions teachers hope their students can rely upon when they encounter unique situations in their real worlds.

Equally relevant to the connection with universals is the way a student will "make sense of their experience in the world and begin to organize it into the unity, significance and coherence of art" (O'Neill and Lambert, 1982 p.15). As well, the opportunity to recognize symbols, to enter into a degree of consciousness belonging to a fictitious character and to focus on interacting with others spontaneously is likely to enhance the depth with which a student encounters the real world, and to assign value to real experiences as they occur.

An articulate advocate of the arts in the development of educational curriculum theory, Eisner (1979) is adamant in his belief that the arts provide a unique perspective. The degree of awareness developed by students is relative to the opportunities they have to "participate vicariously

in the lives of others, to acquire an understanding of situations, and therefore to know them in ways that only the arts can reveal" (p.227).

This emphasis on encouraging students to give credence to their own experience in real life encounters permeates a paper given by Highwater (1989) at the "Drama as a Meaning Maker" American conference. In reference to the effect the media has had on the general public, he states:

What we have done is to censor people out of existence. We have sent them under their beds. We have denied their existence so they don't want to be anybody. We have destroyed their experience and we are less because of it. (p.85)

I would extend this analogy to include the effect that the education system has had on its students. Highwater also makes use of a phrase which captures the necessary ambiguity of the entire drama experience by saying that he relates more closely with a 'multiverse' than a universe. How clearly that captures the essence of a drama teacher's expectations.

Eisner (1979) corroborates this by writing:

The idea that there are multiple ways in which things are known - that there is a variety of expressive

modalities through which what is known can be disclosed - simply has been absent from the conversations that animate the educational research community . (p.224)

This idea of layering experience in a multiverse, provides an interesting perspective from which to examine drama work. It has been stated many times that drama comprises a multiplicity of skills, but this has yet to be translated into a holistic view of the personal worlds of the student, both inner and outer. In the past, the perspective of the most active ingredient in the class, the pupils, has not been regarded as reciprocal to the outcome of events. What Highwater suggests dovetails nicely with the concepts of drama education, for it invites both students and teachers to insist on making meaning together.

The next benefit drama can envelop students in is that of challenging and asserting moral values. Drama in education, as it is currently practised, asserts Graham (1984), is both art-form and learning-form. It offers valid and important kinds of knowledge to students, different from conventional school knowledge. In a society which is complex and diverse, the boundaries of moral attitude are sometimes hazy. A recent paper (Hansen,1989)

talks about the importance of drama to the understanding of values: "Drama is responsible for creating context and context is necessary for meaning" (p.216). This strongly supports the Heathcote/Bolton stance of drama as a vehicle for learning.

Teachers who adopt an educational drama approach stand to benefit in many ways, not the least of which is to be regarded as human beings by students. Although the teacher remains responsible for the framework, the entire group, teacher included, must pursue the learning outcomes together. According to Morgan and Saxton (1988), "The teacher's function is to find those approaches which will be divergent and open" (p.36). This approach balances the responsibility in the room, a condition which causes anxiety for many teachers. Verriour (1985) states that, through being in role, teachers and students are allowed to adopt social roles outside the familiar ones they carry. A different and special relationship is fostered in such an environment.

As guideposts for teachers, Neelands (1984) suggests that teachers can establish a comfortable environment for learning by working toward the following:

- taking informed risks
- trying not to be the omnipotent expert

- encouraging self-assessment in students and self
- helping students find their own voice
- applying meaningful contexts in the classroom, and not depending on irrelevant exercises

The importance of these criteria is that they suggest dual responsibility in the classroom. Granted, the list of behaviors for teachers sounds optimistic and, perhaps for some, even daunting. Nevertheless, if we are to bury the 'pitcher of knowledge' theory forever, teachers will need to find ways to meet the challenges of the current trends in education.

A quarrel of Hornbrook (1985) is with the mystical quality which permeates the realm of drama teaching. If the world of pretend cannot be mystical, then we are in grave danger of eliminating much of the ritual of theatre and cultural habits in general. His reference to Dorothy Heathcote as a mystic indicates his unwillingness to appreciate the charismatic personality of a contemporary with credibility and a fear of the unknown. As Bolton (1986) points out: "Moving in and out of scripts is something Dorothy Heathcote has been doing for years" (p.370). It seems that Hornbrook has a blind eye in

certain directions. Graham (1984) claims, "Bolton defends drama in education through identifying the aesthetic of theatre as a key to good drama practice" (p.284).

Hornbrook fails to recognize what Bolton has categorically defined in his theory as the 'performance mode', the end of the spectrum which provides for the very experience Hornbrook claims is lacking.

In a concise manner, Male (1990) insists that Hornbrook has neglected for the most part to identify anything seriously amiss with the methodology. Her gentle sarcasm casts considerable doubt on the claims Hornbrook makes against drama in education as she finds numerous contradictions in Hornbrook's documentation. In short order she identifies her major disagreements with his thoughts on philosophical underpinning, historical development of drama, perceptions of the theorists, and legitimate course content.

Only once does Hornbrook pose a question which seems to want to bridge the opposing theories. This is when he asks: "If children are learning through drama, then what are they learning?" (p.356). Fortunately, this opens the door for a response, and here I quote Warwick Dobson (1986) at length:

They might be learning that they have a voice; they

are learning that it is possible to take responsibility for their own actions; they are learning that there is a power in collective action; they are learning that individuals have responsibilities that go beyond their own self-interest; they are learning that it is possible to use dramatic forms to pose questions and explore issues which have a direct bearing on their own lives; they are learning their own cultural forms possess legitimacy; and above all they are learning that drama and theatre provide a potent means of exposing and challenging the dominant ideology and its prevailing modes of intimidation (p. 373).

What is ultimately disturbing is the continued resistance to allowing the best elements of both forms to be at work in the classroom. Perhaps a new generation of theorists will find a way to merge the resources of both paths in a manner acceptable to everyone.

Hansen (1989) capsulizes the underlying intention of both sides by saying: "Drama/theatre is an especially effective way to negotiate the potential and actual meaning of the behaviours that make up a human life" (p.218). It is my belief that if drama is now to move ahead and continue to build on the strengths that exist in

the dramatic art form, there must be a desire to promote theories that do not develop for the sake of administrative ease, but for the benefit of the students we teach.

In a curriculum oriented toward personal relevance we can capture the events and situations which occur so rapidly in our highly technical world, and anchor them securely to an understanding based in what Graham (1986) calls "a historical, political and economic context". It is time to act on the basis suggested by Eisner (1979) by building curricula which "emphasizes personal meaning and the schools responsibility to develop programs which make such meanings possible" (p.57).

Drama teachers are in the uniquely situated position to facilitate such programming within schools, not only in their own classrooms, but also, should they choose to do so, in harmony with other subject area teachers in challenging, meaningful ways.

3. Design of the Study

Introduction

The objective of the study was to describe as fully as possible, the events in Room 202, the Drama Studio, during the 1990-91 school year. The experiences of a teacher implementing a new program, using the unique set of strategies of the drama in education model and a shift in learning objectives, are not well-documented in the literature. Of course, the events affect two parties, student and teacher, and every effort has been made to describe the perceptions of each group in a balanced manner. Many questions of both a personal and professional nature were posed before embarking on this adventure. For example: What are the possibilities for drama education? What is wrong with the present arrangement? What do students currently gain from the program? What do I currently gain from the program? What do I hope to accomplish by changing paradigms? At the very heart of an educational drama program lies the need to question and reflect and here I hope to find my way to becoming 'co-learner/explorer, not 'omnipotent expert'!

Selection of Site

The study's intimate focus on the reactions of the students and myself made it essential for the research to be conducted in the least threatening, most comfortable environment possible. For this reason, I chose my own classroom in a Burnaby secondary school as the site.

This particular school has some characteristics which contribute to its suitability as a research site. It is situated in a predominantly residential, mixed income suburban neighbourhood. The student population floats at approximately 600, which is considerably smaller than many contemporary secondary schools. Thus it resembles the size of school located away from the heavily populated urban centres. The student body is multi-ethnic and there are several programs for special need students in the school. The staff of thirty-five is generally supportive of each other and enthusiastically become involved in school activities. The school and district administration are regarded as progressive and both demonstrated support of this study.

The Drama Studio is located on the second floor of the school in a recently renovated classroom. Larger than a regular classroom, the studio has an annex for storage and a small office for me. The space itself contributes to the contentment I experience as a teacher. The classroom

space is carpeted with a better-than-average quality carpet. It is a comfortable, bright, friendly space, much-admired by staff and appreciated by students. There are no desks; chairs are brought in as needed, but not on a permanent basis - we sit on the floor.

The Studio has three proper bars for hanging theatre lights and adequate power supplies and outlets for the equipment that exists. In short, it is a model, yet modest, example of a suitable space for drama. No other classes are taught in the room. Students frequently comment on the distinct 'personality' the room has in comparison to the rest of the school.

Selection of subjects

The study used the work of five groups of students: two Drama Eight classes (with no previous drama background), two Drama Nine classes and one Drama Ten class, (either one or two years drama experience at the time of the study). There are no prerequisites for drama students at the junior secondary level which invites a great mixture of interest and ability, ranging from the 'easy credit' seekers to the 'I'm going to be an actor' hopefuls. Classes are sixty minutes long, three times per week.

Research Role

In my dual role as teacher/researcher, I did not feel that there was anything unusual enough to alter the normal proceedings in class, nor would this persona be disruptive to the students in any way. I have been a teacher in this school since 1988 and am currently in the second year of a three-year appointment as Visual and Performing Arts Department Head. The students are accustomed to my style and expectations in the areas of discipline and classroom management. I feel that the student/teacher relationship is most satisfactory and assisted in eliciting depth and truth in student responses.

Often in the course of the study I experienced multiple roles simultaneously, being conscious of myself as teacher, teacher-in-role, researcher and learner. There was frequently the sensation of the 'infinite mirror' syndrome of 'watching myself watching'.

Data Collection

From the moment the bell rang to signal the beginning of term in September, the spontaneous and reflective reactions of teachers and students to the events of the lessons were recorded. It took daily practice to be aware of the kinds of questions I needed to ask myself as the

lessons unfolded. How would I make the next step into the lesson deepen belief or follow a student's idea? Why did this 'in-role' sequence work so well in the morning class, but not at all in the afternoon session? What was it that I said as teacher-in-role that prompted insightful responses from the students? How will I articulate this so other teachers will be able to follow the thinking?

The study occurred over the ten months of the 1990-91 school year providing a diverse variety of opportunities for data collection. My personal field observations were ongoing, and were supplemented with journal reflections. In addition, student journals, writing-in-role assignments and short evaluation papers were examined. A central premise of the educational drama approach is that reflection on the process is essential for developing personalized knowledge of the event and a necessary ingredient in understanding change in perspectives.

An important source of feedback throughout the study was provided by Susann Baum, a colleague and friend, whose study (1991) provides the complementary view of the senior grades, Eleven and Twelve. Beginning in the summer of 1990, we both enrolled in Gavin Bolton's course, and from there, we shared the steps of our journey. I was always grateful for the chance to corroborate findings, clarify

thinking about some element or commiserate when the going was tough. We acted as sounding boards for each other, were empathetic in a way no other person could be, helped each other organize plans, and often found a rational explanation for something the other could not. In many ways it was the first real opportunity I had to enjoy effective collegial support and cooperative learning, and my wish is to develop this kind of arrangement more often in the future. We need to be alert to the resources that exist in our fellow teachers, and be generous about giving and dipping in to the pool of knowledge. There were many times during the year when I felt that I was heading off on a wrong tangent, only to discover through talking to Susann that she was feeling the same way. Without the reassurance of touching base regularly at dinner meetings, getting through the year would have been considerably harder. As we met throughout the year to discuss our progress, we were sometimes elated with our discoveries, at other times discouraged by our own lack of understanding. Perhaps more accurately, the stumbling through the unknown that was inevitable and necessary became an important part of the journey.

Another benefit to our close working relationship was the opportunity it provided for probing the subject more

deeply. Between the two of us, one was often clearer on a certain aspect than the other; thus, in regard to our strengths, we complemented each other very well. Even when it came time to do the research proposal, the questioning process we underwent was of substantial use to both of us.

In retrospect, there was a real need to have the contact with someone like Susann, partially because drama teachers are isolated in their individual schools and also because it is rare for such radical changes to occur to people coincidentally. As to how the relationship may have influenced the study, I suggest that, while the confidence it afforded helped immensely to keep us on track, once in the classroom, as ever, the teacher is quite alone with the students. At the same time, actions taken may later be analyzed at length, the analysis to be of benefit on another occasion.

This study emerged in its present form because it could not be done any other way, it was a day-to-day challenge not to fall back into old habits and practices, and having each other helped ensure that our commitment would be realized.

4. The Analysis of the Data

Introduction

This chapter describes several aspects of the study which became apparent as the work progressed. The significant learning objectives which emerged from the data collected from the students are summarized here. Also included in the chapter are the elements which affected my teaching role. It became clear as the study progressed that the relationship between students and teacher was an evolving, not a static one. Each party had adjustments to make and one stage of growth precipitated the next. The changes of greatest importance occurred in my teaching style and these are also described in this chapter.

Planning

At the beginning of the study, Susann Baum and I decided to run parallel programs throughout the year as much as possible. Our reasons for doing so were based on the assumption that this would make a more supportive environment for us to work in as the material was unfamiliar. By being able to give each other immediate feedback on our experiences in the classroom, we would reinforce the events in our memories and also be able to

modify or adjust the plans accordingly in successive, repeated lessons. We could also begin to make suggestions and recommendations for the range of grade levels we were studying, Grade Eight through Ten for me and Grades Eleven and Twelve in Susann's case. We felt that for the purposes of the study it would be both suitable and interesting if we concentrated on the process of educational drama, and that it was not critical to devise extra material to accommodate different grade levels.

In terms of teacher preparation this approach supplied built-in confidence, as the lessons were decided upon in September for the entire year. This became important as a security measure to ensure that we did not revert to the previous methodology simply for the sake of convenience. Indeed, once the initial months were past, the feeling of anxiety vanished without lingering doubt about the effectiveness of the new methodology. Another effect of this planning was the opportunity it provided for reflection on the experiences. In the past it was often too easy to bulldoze through the year with the kind of frenetic energy created by the mood of the old methodology. One of the most significant features of the new approach was that events seemed to slow down to a manageable pace; instead of a blur of abrupt fragments,

moments became more recognizable and were seen in detail.

Co-learner

The teaching role in the educational drama process is unique in that it promotes the creation of a cooperative learning relationship with students. A teacher who embraces this method can no longer wear the mask of 'expert', but must actively seek interaction with students through the use of role drama, shared discovery, and risk taking. The teacher must do what students are expected to do every day - cope with new information to be processed in a personally relevant way, contribute spontaneously as incidents unfold, and assess the value of the events as they affect the group as a whole.

Even though my relationship with students was excellent in the past, I felt that the rapport was enhanced when I began to enter into the learning with them, rather than 'directing' activities. I felt that students were finally able to see me as a human being who, like them, struggled to understand my responses to our various projects. I also felt much more connected and alert during the day-to-day encounters, as my teaching could not rely on the successes of the past. No longer anticipating the expected responses from the students to

the 'tried and true' exercises and scenes freed me up to become much more open to their responses and consequently to be more creative.

As a result of the freshness of each new activity the sense of dissatisfaction and boredom I had been experiencing disappeared. Most importantly, while many of the role dramas were thought-provoking, challenging and stirring, I knew that these moments did not ever have to be repeated; that now, with a way of tackling the essence of the dramatic event, I could explore any issue that might be of interest to the students. In the old style of drama teaching, it was a constant struggle to find appropriate script material for young secondary students, resulting in repeated use when something good happened to be unearthed.

Change of teaching style

The importance of teaching style to learning is indisputable, and the teacher of educational drama has what Neelands (1984) refers to as an opportunity to establish a comfortable environment for learning. However, in order to do this, some of the old ways must be abandoned in favor of techniques that place the teacher inside the action, not directing from outside. This is not

to say that this is the only way classes are conducted, for like any other style, it would wear thin with overuse. It is a unique experience as a teacher to be part of a discovery that is not anticipated or predetermined.

Several changes occurred in my approach to teaching style as the year progressed. In many instances, I was able to resist the 'teacher' impulse to tell students how to work through an idea and accept what the students offered as solutions. When it was obvious that an opportunity was present to clarify a point of theatre art form, I was able to do so in the context of the work in progress, not through an unfamiliar or insignificant example.

This format allowed great freedom for the teacher to work on several planes at once. During class I found I was much less preoccupied with the outcome of the event than with how we as a group would arrive there. Largely because this pressure was absent, I feel that, generally, the students were more 'tuned in' to the moment-to-moment details and were able to open up more, give more ideas, work better in groups, and basically be more involved as they were not working toward a mark out of ten for an improvisation in which they had invested ten minutes' work.

The issue of classroom management became largely a moot point, as all the students were in some way occupied with the building of the drama. Lapses of concentration were rare because there seemed to be a group pressure on individuals to make things work 'for the good of the whole'. As Dorothy Heathcote (1972) advises:

One very rarely finds children in this relationship to the teacher being rude or lacking class discipline, because each recognizes the strength of the other in the situation....This attitude brings with it certain instinctively felt disciplines which children will not cross. (p. 162)

In short, many problems inherent to the old methodology were simply not encountered in the new approach. It became clear that this year provided a way in to hammering out a program in keeping with the philosophy of the Year 2000 document proposed by the British Columbia Ministry of Education. Here was a tangible opportunity to explore child-centred learning, integrated programming and highly interactive thinking.

5. THE YEAR: A DESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVE OF THE JOURNEY

Perhaps more than in any previous year in my ten years of teaching, September, 1990, had a special meaning. It was special because I felt, finally, that I could walk into my drama classroom and begin to offer the kind of program which I sensed that drama could be. It was special because the summer class with Gavin Bolton kindled some spark that I was beginning to feel was extinguished. It was also special because I knew that I would soon be faced with the kind of creative exercise that I had not seriously tapped into since my own days as a student - thinking on my feet, going with group decisions, working toward understanding. All of these things had my adrenalin pumping as the fifth of September drew closer and classes would soon be gathering in the studio for their drama experiences. If ever there was to be a chance for me to develop as a drama teacher in a significant way, this was it.

I was excited by the opportunity to work through the material I'd learned over the summer, only now with real live students. In truth, I felt inspired. This acted like a psychological safety-net; since I already understood how the material had affected me, I felt more confident in

leading my classes through the same work. Susann and I agreed that, as far as possible, we would try to follow the Bolton course chronologically, aiming to finish units at roughly the same time so that we could discuss the details of our respective implementation. This stage of the journey was at once exciting and intimidating: the delight of anticipation.

September, 1990

Journal Entry, September 5: I am excited, nervous, confident, determined, joyous, expectant, eager, stimulated, challenged, alert, conscious of details, anchored in my academic thinking and ready to see the year unfold in a new, exciting way. After the initial introductory classes, designed simply to help me learn names and for the students to meet each other, I want to quickly leap in to a role drama. I feel anxiety, but, like jumping off the high board, I know that I have already walked to the edge of the board and it is easier to take the leap than to turn and go back down the ladder. For a moment though, I consider it. (end of entry)

The first example of the new type of drama activity is an adaptation of one of Gavin Bolton's exercises. Even at this point I recognize, perhaps subconsciously, that

for the material to succeed, I must make it my own, hence the adaptation. The class become architectural students in the second term of their first year and are asked by their instructor to consider a proposal submitted by the local school board in regard to designing a brand new school to accommodate special needs students. Even in the apparent simplicity of this scenario, many of the essential elements for meeting critical learning objectives have been set up. First, by ensuring that the students are not in a totally unfamiliar role (they are still students and I am still an instructor), the way is cleared for everyone to enter into a new, imaginary world with a high degree of confidence. The class has arranged itself, without direction, into a format appropriate to the environment. Before the class began I asked a student if he would be willing to take on the role of a student confined to a wheelchair, and instructed him to keep one arm immobile and to slightly turn in his toes. These very subtle adjustments allow the student to build believability in the character without resorting to 'acting as an invalid'. Davis and Birtwistle (1990) write: "Drama, as art, must involve high level selectivity of sign to enable the sign to resonate layers of meaning in relation to the context of the drama" (p.11). In reflection after the drama the

student journals reveal almost unanimously that in every class where the drama was done, the person playing the special needs person was so real that students were compelled to treat the drama as real and not as a game. The recognized symbol of this 'reality' was always the paralysed arm. Something was resonating for these students.

The class is introduced to the special needs student, and are told that the person is there to act as a consultant in their design project. They are to ask questions and discuss their plans with the special needs person, then break into small groups to establish tentative designs. By this point into the drama it is clear to me that I am needed only as a guide, and that the students are well-engaged in making the moment progressively more real. The sincere quality of the questions they ask shows depth of understanding and intelligence - they are task-oriented toward developing a suitable site for the special needs user.

Would you like the school to have a separate area for special needs students or should we keep the building as together (integrated) as possible?

What kinds of recreational activity areas do you

think are needed?

Would it be better to have ramps or lifts? Which is most convenient?

In addition, the students made myriad observations on the small details, the height of the lockers, the width of the halls, tables or desks, sliding or swinging doors, covered walkways and lowered water fountains. They began to think in real terms within the fictional situation.

The nature of the drama allows the class to be endowed with qualities as the work proceeds. It is not necessary for anyone to 'act' in a role. The simple label of 'student' is enough for the class to establish an appropriate response to the work. Since the behaviours required are so similar to those required of them in reality, they are free to concentrate on the task not on themselves having to play a role. If they lose the focus on the task, the drama fails. The teacher in role helps to keep the focus on the design problem. Students comment similarly whether in Grade Eight, Nine or Ten :

Everyone took it seriously because it was a serious subject; we all knew that ___ could walk and really has the use of his arms and legs, but because of the earnest way he presented his case, we left the drama

room and quickly became architect students; the teacher was serious, so we were too.

I felt like my ideas might actually be useful!

The person who played the man in the wheelchair was very convincing. He did not have to think about the answers he gave to the questions we asked. It seemed as though he actually was in a wheelchair and had experienced some of the problems that a handicapped person might come across.

Everyone came up with innovative ideas to solve the problem, and it was also realistic because we addressed each other formally.

I feel that the spontaneity was the key to the realism because nobody had a chance to think about what they were doing ahead of time.

The following comments are from the boy who actually played the role:

I found myself thinking: these kids have really terrific ideas.

The reason it worked so well is because it wasn't like we were playing a role, it was as if it were really happening.

What I believe they have been able to understand includes a sense of their own social development that, as they feel success in tackling a real social issue, they assess and evaluate the responses of other students in an active way. The group solves a significant problem together, achieving in one hour a feeling of unity which formerly took weeks of games to accomplish, and most importantly develops a change of attitude and awareness, both toward the difficulties experienced by special needs people and the nature of drama itself. In practical terms, the drama is a success, for the students have demonstrated the ability to recognize what is required of them in the situation and to make individual contributions to the outcome. I secretly cheer for Gavin Bolton!

October, 1990

As I begin to feel more comfortable with the style, I notice myself gradually turning decision making over to the class, not just during dramatic playing, but any time when I suspect it would be just as effective for them to make a decision, and this also empowers them in present and future negotiations. I notice that they begin to trust me more, and conversely I trust them to make more mature judgments - happily, this is occurring. I'm starting to

get swamped by the regular fall routine - the glow of newness of September has dissipated and we all feel more comfortable with each other. Often this is the time of year when 'problem' students begin to make themselves known, but I find that this isn't happening much at all. Because the students are co-dependents in the dramas, they are committed more to the work than entertaining each other.

Although I'm not sure how it will succeed, I decide to try a drama which not only takes us to a distant historical time, but places all the students in an unfamiliar role outside their experience. We embark on Bolton's monastery experience. In all fairness, the work is somewhat out of context - the students have not had any input in the choice and I feel that there is a certain resentment because of this neglect on my part. However, some extremely important elements of drama are accessible through the unit, so we proceed.

The underlying objective is to help the student understand the concept of sanctuary. We begin by establishing the setting. The students are asked to locate something in the room that will simulate the sound of a huge brass door knocker on the front entrance of the monastery. After individuals and groups demonstrate their

sounds, I ask them to arrange the chairs to represent a chapel area, a place where we meet for prayers every four hours. This problem to solve involves a high degree of seriousness. Once the chairs have been arranged in an adequate way, I ask all of them to stand with me in front of the space and observe what they have created. This moment of artistic choice is critical in the development of a strong image base for all of us, as well as the rearranging we do to enhance the image even further. The theatrical use of space to create a sense of order and hierarchy suitable for the drama is completed entirely by the students, prodded simply by the question, "Is it exactly the way you imagine it should be, now? If not then make your final adjustments, and we will accept that as done."

The drama continues to unfold with the introduction of a stranger (student in role) who arrives at the monastery seeking sanctuary. The students are semi-cognizant of what this means, and in an out of role discussion after the class, several students bring their current world-knowledge to light with the mention of the parallel situation which existed for Manuel Noriega and the priests in Panama during the American invasion of that country.

Among the many pleasant surprises which occur for me in this unit is the manner in which students are able to find their way into the atmosphere of a fourteenth century monastery, their ease in developing a sensitivity to the role of the monks and the abbot, and their treatment of the stranger with the proper mixture of compassion and suspicion. Keeping in mind that these are regular classes full of young teenagers, the concentration and intensity are impressive.

One other particularly significant moment emerges from this unit. The class, divided into groups of six or seven, is asked to reveal through a tableau what they believe is the strongest point of tension, or struggle, in the drama. Using the living museum technique, we are treated to such powerful images as the abstract representation of man struggling with the mores of the society around him; the inhumanity of the treatment some people receive from society; the omnipresent struggle of religion vs. politics; the strength of compassion. The students themselves are able to 'read' the tableaux clearly and fully articulate the essence of each picture, discussing such details as the way groups have arranged themselves to help space create the meaning of the picture, and how interesting it is to see what each group

highlights as being important.

When asked to comment on what was memorable from the unit some seven months later, some students replied:

I had no idea what was happening at the beginning of the unit, but by the time we had got to the end I realized how much I had actually learned: about staying in role, concentrating on what was happening around me.

The most difficult thing in this unit was trying to compare our reactions (to the idea of sanctuary) with a monk's reaction in the 1300's, and wondering if they had to cope with some of the same dilemmas that we have to in 1990.

In retrospect, it was essential for reflection on the events in the unit to occur after a considerable time had passed. This enforced the belief that the majority of growth which occurs through drama is achieved upon the objective reflection which happens at a distance from the events.

It is interesting to note that there were several instances in this unit where students were engaged in dramatic playing, which was generally unfamiliar to them.

Most students commented similarly to the following in reflecting on the activities:

It was neat because when the stranger walked in, we didn't know quite what to expect and how to react, but after the first few people had spoken it was easy to see what we had to do. It was neat because it was so spontaneous - we had no preparation time to think up questions for the stranger.

The way the room became the monastery helped me believe I was there.

As a teacher, I was enjoying the group communication that was happening without words. The class had reached a significant level in their "dependence upon a tacit agreement by the members of the group to manage and sustain the fictitious social context" (Bolton, 1990). For the classes this was a key moment in understanding the nature of drama.

The monastery unit ran for six to nine classes, depending on the needs and desires of the particular group. Incorporated at various points in the drama were individual, pair, small group and whole class improvisation, directing and scriptwriting, recognizing

symbols, use of space and dramatic tension, use of language to match the situation and, naturally, some factual historical information.

I experience moments of panic now. I have finished doing the monastery drama with all the Grade Nine and Ten classes. Although I realize that this served to set the tone of seriousness I sought, it has alienated some of the students. Partly this is because they were not expecting this type of work, but also, I later realize, it is because I imposed it on them - they had no stake in the material. Regardless, they displayed some of the most thoughtful, sophisticated creativity I had seen them produce in two years. However the panicky feeling sets me back a few steps as I feel that I must somehow appease them and 'win' the 'doubters' back...

Fortunately, I do not have time to consider falling back into 'old' strategies. Fate steps in at this moment as one of the community outreach counsellors arrives at my door with an invitation. The first week of November is Substance Abuse Awareness week; can I think of any way to incorporate this as a theme in the Fine Arts Department? Since the logical purpose of the special focus week is to reach as many students as possible with information on substance abuse, the logical route might be to produce a

play to present at noon hours for the rest of the school - a perfect opportunity for a unit on playbuilding. I am motivated to get underway as we have only three weeks to ready a piece for the week indicated. I had only been involved in coordinating one student collective before.

Fate also indirectly guided this step, as only a week before, I had the enlightening and fortunate opportunity to observe Carole Tarlington work with a group of elementary school students at the annual Association of British Columbia Drama Educators Conference. Tarlington's innovative work over many years as director of Vancouver Youth Theatre has been enthusiastically received by the education community. This opportunity for observation was all I needed to feel confident that we could succeed with a similar model. I firmly believe that, if more teachers were willing to provide such valuable inservice, the myths that are floating around could easily be dispelled.

Things are progressing for the Grade Nine classes. We begin the play by asking what it is that is important for secondary school students to know about Substance Abuse. Their list of concerns is thorough and we start to examine the small details of various situations. All of the initial scenarios are developed in pairs through the theatre convention of tableaux. Students in pairs are

asked to frame a still picture of two people who might be affected in some way by even an occasional use of a substance. I want them to consider the larger question, and to begin to define for themselves, "when does use become abuse?" All students are keen to contribute either personal stories or opinions. Knowing that the work will soon be in the performance mode gives the class added impetus to stay with the work and concentration is high. There is a definite desire on the part of the students to 'get the stories right'; they do not want to treat the scenes lightly as they are original creations, they are co-creators and work extremely hard to make meaning for their intended audience, whom they know will be students. As Hansen (1989) noted in an address to educators, "...a second aspect of the negotiation of meaning is of great importance to drama with young people: the empowering of all parties" (p.216).

Now we are asked to prepare the entire assembly for Remembrance Day. It is, of course, the normal procedure, especially as the expectation is that one enjoys creating these events so that the enrolment in the program will increase. This then sets us on track for the Grade Ten class.

Meanwhile, I am anxious about the Grade Eight groups,

and feel that I must get further into some of the dramatic play mode that Bolton has clearly established in our thinking as the natural first step into role drama. The Grade Eight classes are seemingly more amenable to the process, as they do not have a previous history with me. They enter into the work somewhat more freely in their expectations, but are, of course, restricted by their shyness and unfamiliarity with each other.

We start by looking at teen violence and are held by the interest that is generated in a local murder story. A troubled young student has been taken into the woods by some of his peers and bludgeoned to death over a drug deal gone bad. Many of the students are familiar with the case, but we also look at the issue that is really horrifying, and that is that some of the students at that school know about the event, but have not told anyone about it! Through a variety of theatre conventions, we explore how it is possible for anyone to be involved in such a situation.

After several days of exploration through small group role-plays and interpretive tableaux, where we examined the "at-risk" person from many sides including the perspectives of friends, family, psychologists, teachers, police, a whole class role-play was undertaken.

I asked the group to arrange the room as it would appear if some school counsellors and teachers were having a meeting. Without any input from me, the room was transformed, collectively, to a boardroom, with a four-foot by eight-foot platform raised onto two four-foot square blocks, and chairs for each class member (28) placed evenly around the table. I then asked for three volunteers to be placed on the 'Hot-seat' a technique useful for interviewing characters for insight into a particular situation. I took the three volunteers into the hall and explained that they would be in role as 'street kids' who would be granted absolute impunity and confidentiality regarding anything that was said.

Leaving them in the hall, I returned to the classroom in role as a school counsellor/facilitator at the meeting and invited the rest of the class to enter into their roles as teachers and counsellors through a brief discussion about the rising incidence of crime throughout the city's schools, noting that it was reaching epidemic proportions, requiring our immediate attention. I explained who our guests would be and informed them of the confidentiality agreement.

Once the three 'street kids' entered the room, several things became noticeable. Here is a brief

description of my initial observations:

The Street Kids: As these three (two boys and a girl) entered the room, they were already in role. They looked to me briefly to be directed to their seats at one end of the board table and then did not require my guidance in any way after that point. Imagine how intimidating it must have appeared to them to sit at one end of an oval with twenty-five enquiring faces peering at them!

Seemingly unconcerned, they adapted themselves readily to the situation, variously seated but with an outward, yet subtle defiance of authority indicated by a slouch, crossed arms, chewing gum, and direct staring back at their interviewers. Once the discussion began, they easily fielded the questions, were reasonably polite and incredibly candid. I am convinced this was due to the impunity clause.

The Teachers/Counsellors: Although the group responded appropriately to me in role before the three street kids entered the role drama, it wasn't until they actually took over the activity and I basically withdrew, that the group character emerged. I had deliberately requested school counsellors rather than administrators so that an

atmosphere of concern, not hostility, would prevail. It also allowed the students' own knowledge of street violence to be exposed, as they perceive that a counsellor might know some of these things which happen, but a principal would be too far removed from the 'action' to be in touch with what really happens. I was correct in this assumption, as the class became 'softly' professional in their demeanour, many sitting up straighter, all deferring to the next speaker, raising a hand when they wanted to speak, phrasing their questions to the three volunteers in an adult/child tone. Again, once they began the flow of discussion and were focused on the task of trying to understand the guests' perspectives on the increasing rate of violence, they did not look to me for direction.

For a full fifty minutes, the three guests kept the rest of us enthralled with their family histories. Detailed explanations were provided as to why they were in such precarious positions. Each made personal observations on the state of things on the street, in the schools and in society. Many candid stories were shared about things that had happened either to them or their friends. Totally surprisingly, to me at least, was that they reversed the questioning and asked the 'counsellors' about their approaches to kids and suggested that some of the

practices might be alienating a certain type of kid. Throughout the hour, I was interested to see if there would be a dominance of a few students during the interview, but each new path of questioning seemed to encourage new speakers. By the end of the hour, everyone had contributed and everyone had been absorbed in the experience.

Although the year has really just started, I am beginning to sense a familiarity and ease that inauspiciously creeps into an experience if the traveller remains long enough in one place. I begin to use the currency freely, I become comfortable addressing people in the new language without their laughing, and I am learning to understand and use appropriate conventions.

November, 1990

Then it is the middle of November, the onset of the flu season ... the crush to get report cards done and the reality of assessment hits me. Since I have not had the tidy 'six out of ten' collection of marks to get me through the term, I must make decisions about the validity of my evaluative techniques. I decide that the only fair way to move through this transition is to base the mark on self-assessment reports from the students, and an open

evaluation from me on each individual student using a modified checklist. Examples of these early criteria are such observations as:

- responds to classroom rules, procedures and routines
- displays a responsible attitude toward physical and emotional safety and comfort
- works cooperatively and productively with all members of the class in pairs, small groups and large groups
- supports positively the work of others

The evaluation sheet is distributed to the students and they are asked to complete the sheet using a rating of E=excellent, G=good, I=improving, NW=Needs Work, and U=Unsatisfactory. We meet individually after these have been completed to discuss any outstanding areas of concern.

As the debate over suitable assessment practices is constant, I am attempting to remain open-minded enough to try any potential arrangement. But here, too, I begin to see that the more involved in the process I invite the students to be, the more accurate the evaluation. I realize fairly quickly that if I am to remain sane through the process outlined above I will have to build in

some classroom time where the students can work uninterrupted, without my input or direction, for a reasonable length of time. Thus, for the first time in the year, I resort to an old standby, the oral reading of a one-act play! Unfortunately, it is not even a good example of one. It is a standard 'mellerdrammer' which I formerly used to introduce the use of tableaux.)

Although I do this only with the Grade Eight classes, I experience a great deal of guilt over this exercise, feeling that I am compromising the integrity of the program and not using legitimate educational drama practices, but reality is that I am responsible for one hundred and eighty plus students, and I need the time to step back from the work to breathe and analyze our progress. In actuality they too are rather tired from the energy this type of working demands, and we all benefit from this brief hiatus. It is an observation that we are sharing a much more intense relationship as a group than the other system of working allowed us to develop.

In November, a way of approaching "The Crucible" is initiated with the Grade Nine and Ten classes. Of all the work in the Bolton course, this has left the strongest image with me. Primarily used by Gavin to give us an understanding of narrative techniques I find that it

captures the imagination of the students more than anything to date. Again, the strategy of personalizing the knowledge provides a rich foundation for the rest of the drama to build upon. The reader must keep in mind that while experiencing the essence of "The Crucible" is the objective here, the students will not see the text for at least two weeks. We will first spend time building belief and understanding in the people and times of Salem during the seventeenth century. Following exactly the drama demonstrated by Gavin Bolton, class members assume the roles of several families in seventeenth century Salem. They are summoned to the village church by the priest (teacher-in-role) to hear a report that their daughters have been seen dancing naked in the woods. Through a series of small group and whole group improvisations, the guilt of several of the girls is established. Two notes here: the students are not bothered by the teacher in role being female, in fact during the role drama someone addresses me as 'sir'; second, the girls who actually are guilty have made the choice to be so themselves, the roles are not imposed by the teacher. The students who choose not to be guilty are still of major importance to the drama, however, as suspicion is cast on all of them equally. Student comments:

Just to listen carefully made me believe, really believe that I was there, at the church.

I observed that people were 'willing to be guilty' and that everyone tried hard to 'see' the church and its people.

When you (Teacher in Role) took a book and made us place our hand on the 'Bible' it was a very strong symbol (action) and that helped me believe more.

When I had to go up and say 'my soul is pure' it was hard to lie. I had a guilty feeling inside so I had to confess to my parents and the reverend.

Some very surprising moments occur during the role drama. Because of the carefully designed entry into the drama, students are completely involved in characters which they will maintain over a few days. When they enter the chapel for the first time, my observations as teacher include seeing some of the boys, who are now Salem farmers, automatically reach to remove their hats as they step over the threshold. The girls who are mothers take on the mannerisms of women whose reputations are based on the

demeanor of their children - hushing them, quickly slicking down unruly hair, and scowling at the squirming of their offspring. Even students were startled by the realistic turns that the drama could take:

I observed that people are not really what you expect them to be. For example you expect your daughter not to be involved in it, instead, they were!

Some examples of writing in role from the study of the two lines at the beginning of Act II follow below. The students were engaged in using narration to illuminate subtext for an audience. The following two lines are presented and a class discussion begins about possible ways to interpret them.

Elizabeth: What keeps you? It's almost dark.

John: I were planting far out to the forest's edge.

With the entire class acting as directors, and two volunteers playing John and Elizabeth, the class gives suggestions as to the set and opening actions of both characters. To be considered, they decide, some questions need answering, for example: How does John arrive? What

is Elizabeth doing as she waits? The class finds extremely effective ways to manipulate both time and the space as they interpret the lines silently, and then decide where in the action they should occur.

During this exercise, the perfect opportunities arise to discuss such theatre directions and terminology as upstage, downstage, masking and subtext. The teacher must not be afraid or hesitant to incorporate the elements of the craft at the appropriate times. What must be realized is that this method does not 'throw the baby out with the bathwater'; it allows for these elements to be taught in context, with direct application to the moment.

The student-written examples offered below were developed as narrative inserts after the class directed the volunteers through the two lines. Broken into pairs, each pair wrote their 'hidden thoughts' separately, then placed them appropriately in the scene. Each pair then had both the original lines and their own to use in their presented work. Examples of student's hidden thoughts are:

Elizabeth: At first our marriage was perfect. It really was true love, but now I have my doubts. He comes home late and then gives me another excuse. But his excuses are getting as cold as the dinner that awaits him every night. I want to trust him and I

want our marriage to work out... we need to talk.

Elizabeth: Look at him, he's acting like nothing ever happened. Does he think I'm a fool? Did our marriage vows mean nothing to him? He knows not how to love, only to deceive. I don't know whether to be angry with him or myself.

John: I know she doesn't believe me. I told her I was sorry. Anyways, I stopped seeing Abigail... Doesn't she understand it's over? Oh! She irritates me.

It is easy to teach here that both words and actions can be surplus, and that economy is a more effective way to express meaning. What works in this sequence is that so many learning objectives can be met. Through teaching drama about something, (the lives of people in Salem in the seventeenth century), the students also learned about manipulating time, space and action, the basic elements of theatre, narration, history, language styles, vocal qualities, in a way that always kept them engaging with meaning.

It becomes very clear now that, indeed, showing is a very important part of the lessons, but not in the

previous format of "go away and work on this improv for twenty minutes". When the students do present their work to the class, everyone is tuned in to the specifics of what they are seeing.

The performance mode as seen by Gavin Bolton (1990) is a way to enhance learning through a sharply focused use of the theatrical elements of time, space, and action. Never to be mistaken for actor training, the performance mode requires students to use theatre elements to achieve greater understanding of the material being explored. There is no emphasis on studying theatre elements as learning objectives on their own. The performance mode would be used when it is the intention of the participants to engage the interest of an audience, which would generally be the rest of the class. A useful characteristic of the performance mode, which also distinguishes it from dramatic playing, is that it allows a repeatability, thereby sharpening focus on a single objective. Looking at only two lines of text and juxtaposing some simple narrative techniques with them permits both audience and participants to examine the work closely to obtain greater understanding and ownership of the material.

Comments which arise during post-viewing discussions

include:

I was amazed at how differently people saw the same issues.

The way they arranged the narration was very powerful.

A slight difference in the way I used my voice made a big difference in the meaning.

The way eye contact is used is really important to show the tension between John and Elizabeth.

I liked how we changed character each class. I think it allowed us to have different perspectives on the story and to better understand what was going on in the minds of all the characters, not just one.

One of the criticisms of teacher-in-role comes from the observation that many inexperienced teachers, ie. those without drama background, and even some experienced ones, ie. those who say "I'm not here to act for the kids", are afraid of taking the risk of 'looking silly' in front of their students. In fact, this particular exercise proved indisputably to me, that no matter how small a role I take, it is to my benefit and the students' that I am a

part of the work in a participatory, not directorial manner.

December, 1990

The Grade Eight classes spend December reading the one-act version of "A Christmas Carol" and doing a number of dramatic activities based on the plot, for example, a discussion that takes place between Scrooge and Cratchit before the play begins, a business deal conducted by Scrooge and Jacob Marley which doesn't succeed, a moment in the Cratchit home when the children want something special which the household cannot afford. Again, I notice an almost seasonal shift in the attention span of the classes as the holidays draw nearer.

Even working in this mode, it is difficult to ignore the rhythms of the school year. As we near the Christmas break, the level of fatigue begins to show for teachers and students. The symptoms are the standard ones of short tempers, limited concentration span, increased incidents of inappropriate behaviour, and general impatience for the start of the break. Yet, I strongly feel that these 'end of term symptoms' are less pronounced than in other years both for the students and myself. This might be attributed to the fact that while we worked intensely on the projects

we chose, there was a tangible feeling of slowing the process down, of being in control and of following events through to a natural conclusion, not arbitrarily making the events fit the number of classes (or days remaining in term!).

January, 1991

Over the Christmas break, I have a chance to reflect on the progress so far and to begin mapping the next term. I have several things in mind that I want to accomplish, and fortunately they seem to dovetail conveniently with other subject areas in the school; this is, however, more by accident than design.

During the Bolton course, our major assignment was to create a sequence of lessons on a topic of our choice which would integrate the concepts and methodologies we had been examining. Susann and I chose to design a unit to lead into a study of "A Midsummer Night's Dream", as it is currently required reading on the Grade Nine English curriculum. Although initially we were daunted by the apparent magnitude of the assignment, in retrospect we are also more than grateful to Bolton for forcing us to take the step which has given us the confidence to proceed with our journey into the methodology. Without having tackled

this project too many questions as to potential routes would have remained unanswered. As it was, we were able not only to design the program, but also to receive feedback and suggestions from the entire class before we ever attempted it in a regular classroom.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" seemed a perfect way to begin the new year with the Grade Nines. The classes were initially nervous about tackling Shakespeare, as are most students, but the promise that this would be a different 'way in' helped them to relax somewhat. During assessment 'checkpoints' after the first three lessons, students announced that they felt comfortable, confident in their understanding of the story, and well-immersed in the ambience of the play. This was not surprising, since the text was not introduced until the fifth lesson.

Since Susann and I had developed this particular sequence, the familiarity of it gave us great confidence, and it produced more evidence that we were on the right track to helping our students find personal meaning in the subject matter.

One early section of the sequence is designed to help students understand the relationship between Helena and Hermia, as well as the secret of the elopement of Hermia and Lysander. The students are given copies of the

following passage:

Hermia: And in the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet,
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.
Farewell, sweet playfellow. Pray thou for
us;
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!
Keep word, Lysander. We must starve our
sight
From lovers' food till tomorrow deep
midnight.

In groups of three, they are set the task of interpreting the lines, to be shared with an audience. However, I place restrictions on their work which are that they must remain in the same relative position throughout the scene, moving only from the waist up; they may use gestures to indicate meaning, but no facial expressions; and they must interpret every line of the text in some distinct manner.

This activity serves several purposes. Not only is

the work simple, effective and economical, but the interactions are also quickly recognized by both participants and audience. By allowing 'theatre' to do the work, none of the participants holds sole responsibility for 'carrying' the piece, and this is a basic tenet upon which Bolton's theory of performance mode relies - students never have to 'act'; they are involved in focusing attention on meaning, not on themselves.

Some student reflections after sharing work form the scene where Hermia tells Helena the plans for elopement:

We tried to use symbolism by using our hands only to show their relationship... and tried not to repeat actions.

Doing this scene helped me to understand the language because it made me think about the vocabulary and deeper meanings.

We kept hearing the script to help us understand it ...you have to understand the words to know how to act it out.

We weren't talking, just going through the images so we found out that there was alot more than one meaning to words.

By looking at gestures you get a clear message of what the scene was about so then the language wasn't very hard to understand.

As with any material one uses in this method, it is essential for the teacher to know the basic universal purpose which drives the work. We chose the themes of love, power and illusion as the most relevant to the lives of teenagers. Indeed, a discussion about the illusion of love in today's world revealed remarkably mature insights among the classes.

The learning which occurs here is at different levels: it resonates with the eternal warmth of 'best friends'; keeping secrets from parents; and being passionately 'in love' (a perpetual state of teenage existence). The activity also puts students in touch with the use of narrative, the theatre elements of manipulating space and action and clarifying meaning for an audience. Finally, it serves as an excellent device to slow down the action of the entire play to help students see a small detail clearly, rather than the 'big picture' vaguely.

It was also a hope of mine to integrate some drama work with Social Studies. At the Grade Ten level, classes were beginning to study Canadian history. I knew that one

of the obvious figures to emerge would be Louis Riel, but I was determined not to focus on the interminable trial scene, an oft-used, but rather cloudy lens, through which to understand the essence of the man and the pursuits which drove him through history. This was a chance for me to incorporate again the principles of educational drama which I was trying to solidify in my own mind and we began our unit with a whole-class drama in present day parliament.

The process of planning for content is often frustrating and time-consuming. To do justice to this approach it is necessary to back-track and plan with a possible outcome in mind (ie. what do I want them to learn?). Naturally, there will be incidental learning along the way, but the teacher must have some idea of where they themselves would like to go, and then be flexible enough to adapt and alter the direction if it is necessary, to accommodate the needs of the students. It is essential to narrow the focus sufficiently before the preparation begins, as it is just too easy to head in an irrelevant direction. This step gets easier only with practice.

I thought about the Riel unit for five weeks before I recognized that what I wanted was to build understanding

and empathy for the position of contemporary native peoples in Canada. Through research I discovered that the similarity of issues from the nineteenth century and today is astonishing. With the reality of the Oka ordeal still fresh the topic is pertinent. Based on the issue of land claims and economic progress we do a full-class role drama as a present-day government in session in parliament with teacher in role as Prime Minister, and the class as Ministers. I ended the class with an excerpt written in defence of some action that had been taken by a group of native people (actually a passage spoken by Louis Riel in 1890, whose authorship I did not reveal until we had debriefed the session). There was a precious moment when their jaws dropped simultaneously with "you're kidding"!

I include here an entire journal entry by a grade ten student completed at the end of the first lesson. Embedded in it are all the learning objectives I hoped to achieve in the study of Riel:

Today, we began a unit studying Louis Riel and Native Canadian issues. Ms. Jardine became the Prime Minister of Canada, and everyone else became premiers (sic members) in the House of Commons. The main item of business was the 'Oka situation'. First, several people spoke up with their views on the subject, then

we were separated into several groups and given study material. [Teacher Note: I called these dossiers and asked for a complete political analysis]. In our groups we were to read the newspaper articles and decide the main issues. When we reconvened, we discussed the issues together. Almost everyone had a different opinion on the topic, but no real arguments erupted. Next, we discussed possible solutions, all of which had faults, (but nobody's perfect). Later, we were handed a quote about how Native Canadians fought for their land and their aboriginal rights. it was perfectly valid for today's times and situations, yet it was said over 100 years ago by Louis Riel. This exercise was very helpful in aiding us to understand the link between historical and modern conflicts between the natives and the government. This unit should also teach us to appreciate the native culture of Canada, as well as other cultures/races. I liked this class very much because it made me aware of the other side of the story, which is, I think, something everyone should be exposed to.

The activities in the unit proceed to uncover layers

of understanding: eventually looking at the early government of Canada through the eyes of Sir John A. Macdonald and General Middleton; examining the relationship between Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont; Louis and his family; Louis and his people; and by way of contrast, the contemporary position of Metis people, through role play and the viewing of the CBC production Drums.

The culmination of this study is a presentation to three separate Grade Ten Social Studies classes of several of the pieces of work which students have linked by a narrative. The classes are invited to hold a question and answer session after seeing the performance; the entire situation is ably managed by students, not teachers.

The Grade Eight classes decide to examine the way the elderly are treated in society, after a discussion about the holidays and their interactions with family and traditions. The process for determining the topic takes a full class, so I have two days in which to decide on a way in. In previous years, I would have had the whole way 'paved', but now, I start with the students; no hidden agenda, no preconceived conclusions. Truthfully, although I am curious about where the work will take us, I am no longer afraid of jumping in and trusting that we will

create the event together.

The predominant focus in this sequence is the shift of attitudes that occurs for the students. We do a series of family portraits to indicate where they see the members of their families in relationship to themselves. Some are very surprised by the results. In each group of six, each student gets the chance to sculpt their own family.

For me the strongest image is of the family portraits, because I realized who I was close to and also that my family is very close knit.

In many families, I could see that grandparents are the centre of attention.

I discovered that people's attitudes toward the elderly are different than I expected...some are close, others, not at all.

This unit lasts about eight classes and moves through various phases including the whole class role drama outlined here.

At the end of the drama on aging, the students were asked to become members of a community in a council meeting where the building of a seniors complex was being proposed. They were able to represent the various members

after brainstorming who might be interested stakeholders in the advantages or disadvantages of having the building on the proposed site. The list included: business men, people with aging parents, schoolchildren, taxpayers, people with young children, people who were anti-construction, and people who wanted more green-space.

This ties in with what Bolton (1979) suggests: the energies of the children in this kind of work resemble most normal curriculum activities: the class is reading, recording, discussing, planning, selecting, checking, evaluating; all the common educational skills are practised and a great deal of objective knowledge is obtained. (p.69)

Another component of the unit has the students in a hypothetical family unit with a resident grandparent who must be placed in a home for the elderly. The students do some writing in role here and produce letters which indicate very mature reasoning including economic hardship, lack of space, personal tension between family members, 'it's for your own good', and sheer heartlessness:

Mother,

I'm sorry that things had to turn out like this for you, but this is for the best of the family.

Now I must close off, I'm missing my manicure.

Rhonda

I am thrilled with the honesty and depth demonstrated by these Grade Eight students. In reflection, a strong sense of their own moral fibre becomes clear. These are comments that come from the heart; there were true moments of understanding where they stand on the issues surrounding the elderly in our society. The feelings are articulated clearly and many students are warmed by the experience, but shocked as they realize that their imaginary accounts are all too real for some elderly people.

Already, I have begun to depart from my reliance on the summer's notes and outline. As O'Toole and Haseman (1988) poetically phrase this, "as the water gets deeper, so the person who has learned to swim is freer than the dabbler in the shallows" (p.vii).

February, 1991

An underlying expectation of many of the students, particularly those who are accustomed to an annual Spring Production, starts to percolate, even though I was emphatic at the start of the year that my focus this year

would be on in-class work. Upon further consideration, I realized that I would not be placing the integrity of this model in jeopardy, nor would I incur an overload of extracurricular time, if some of the material that we developed in class was prepared for presentation to an intimate audience of family and friends. This would serve two purposes: first, every student in the entire program would have the opportunity to be in a performance mode in a safe situation (as the material would be a collective effort); and, second, the community/administrative expectation for 'product' could be satisfied on my terms. The rest of the month is absorbed by establishing the theatrical elements of the topics we decide to investigate. We adopt an experience first, not performance first philosophy.

The playbuilding experience we had in November with the Substance Abuse Awareness Week plays provided substantial background and this time I find the students more willing to try out their ideas on each other because they feel safe within the format. One class chooses the topic racism; the other, an 'insider' view of being a teenager today. Some student views:

The most important lesson I learned while working on this project was to play a racist person and when I

was playing the racist person how wrong it felt.

The important lesson I learned through working on the project is that racism is everywhere and it's going to take the help and support of everyone to stop it.

I learned how it felt to be racist and how it felt to be a victim of racism.

Even the little things that we say about people of a different race can affect someone dramatically over the years. The lesson is stop and think before you speak.

The general feeling in the Teenage Years play can be summed up:

Since we are teenagers and our play was about that, it probably made most of us feel comfortable, we acted it out very well and it was real.

March, 1991

March is a short month because of Spring Break and again there are signs of fatigue, but, because the class presentations are scheduled for the week before the vacation, class work is focused and productive right to the end. The presentations are an outstanding success. The parents are extremely proud of the creations their

children have developed, and, naturally, the students revel in the attention. More importantly, however, they commend themselves on having worked together as a whole class, of having done the work themselves, and on seeing the process of creativity in a clearer light. They particularly enjoy the comments provided by other students about how relevant their work is to other kids and how well it was done. Other students recognize the serious efforts of the drama classes and it sets a satisfying tone for everyone. We all leave for the vacation with a sense of accomplishment and anticipation of the last term. For the first time, I don't feel the niggling haunt of "oh no, what will we do for the last six weeks"!

April, 1991

Heading into the last term is a shock because the year has passed so quickly and with purpose. This is a moment of elation - I believe that my students have actually learned about things that will have meaning for them in the future. Not once have we touched on the mechanics of miming, the spontaneity of improv games or the need for 'teamwork' exercises. Yet by this time, students are able to use appropriate gestures in a mimetic fashion to communicate their environment and intentions

clearly, they enter into improvisation, whether in pairs or large groups with confidence and believability, and the classes are cohesive and conscious of the benefits of cooperative learning. An air of authenticity permeates the work. Several moments from the last few months will find a place in my mind's 'photo album' of the journey.

When we begin to negotiate the direction of the final term, the classes almost unanimously opt for exploring something in a comic vein. They feel that they have worked seriously all year and need to explore something that isn't, at least on the surface, so weighty. The teacher is responsible for finding a way to make meaning relevant, yet the right vehicle has to work for the students, too.

After much discussion, we embark on a unit in clowning. I feel sure that I am not pursuing a subject of equal worthiness to the work we have already done this year, but I also know that, because of the standard of work the students achieved throughout the year, the attitude toward the topic is much more dedicated than it would have been otherwise. Eventually, we agree that it would be fun to work as 'street performers' and travel through the school during the last few days of school doing short routines for other classes, beginning with some background information about clowns in general. This

study provides the chance for us to experiment with the creative exercise of designing and applying clown makeup. This activity I justify under the heading 'theatre arts', but it feels like a throwback to a previous life!

The clowning unit is outlined on the book by Mark Stolzman, Be a Clown. It is a 'how to' of clowning which takes students through a detailed series of developmental phases in understanding the essence of clowning. Richly supplied with historical facts, character sketches of famous clowns and some popular 'gags', it has a nice tone about it which makes the students see clowning as an art first, entertainment second.

You didn't have to be yourself. You were able to express yourself in many ways whether or not it's yourself.

...being able to let go and have fun while doing work.

...helps people to learn self-confidence, self-control and esprit de corps (pride in one's group).

Clowning helped me to understand that it's not all that easy to make things funny. It's hard work.

While it seemed a bit frivolous to me at the time, I now realize that because we approached the activity with integrity we built upon some important areas of self-concept, interpersonal skills and creativity. However, during the unit, I felt like I was taking the wrong train to someplace I didn't want to go!

We are also awaiting a performance of "Canadian Stories" by Vancouver Youth Theatre. There is an excellent guide to permit some preview activity in the classroom. This guide sets a precedent in quality that I have not seen before in similar teaching aids. It makes the actual presentation incredibly alive for the audience. I am anxious for the students to develop empathy for the topic, and we work through the series of lessons suggested with great responsiveness.

The Grade Ten class also opts for something comedic, so I suggest the commedia dell 'arte. We explore the notion of stock characters in whole class role play, and they whole-heartedly endorse the starting point. We develop our understanding of the style by working as troupes in the traditional way. They develop three separate groups, each with identifying troupe names: Il Macho Tomato, The Flying Tortellinis, and Il Comedi Moto. Based on stock situations between the characters, each

group improvises a short collection of scenes. Generally, I am pleased with the intensity and energy they bring to the pieces. It seems that the unifying thread through this unit for them is in fact a historical tradition, a little friendly competition for creating the most engaging piece; either the wittiest, or the most physical or the zaniest. Without doubt, it is unanimously enjoyed. It also provides the opportunity for these older students to challenge themselves with the craft of the theatre. I leave the details of staging to them, with a final conference as a whole class to discuss problem areas. They prove excellent directors of their own work.

May, 1991

The last month of classes is effectively upon us, and all is well with the clowns and the commedia troupes. Attention is now directed to the upcoming presentations and everyone is gainfully occupied. This point of the year is distressing for me --- while the work till now has been insightful, serious and thoughtful, I wonder why I have not been able to sustain the pace. Some of my conclusions are that again because of the rhythm of the school year, we are all too tired to be engaged in intense material; that students are now preoccupied with the completion of

their academic subjects; that the usual abundance of year-end activities, both in and out of school hours is extremely disruptive; and, just possibly, the lure of summer vacation is too much to bear. I suppose this fleeting disappointment is, quite fittingly, another stage of the journey. When a person has been away from home for some time, an unbidden wave of homesickness can break over the experience and blur the moment. Also true, however, is that the feeling subsides and one is left to proceed with the journey refreshed.

On the other hand, I am convinced that the level of commitment the students display in the present work is a direct result of the tone set throughout the year. They don't treat clowning or Commedia dell'arte as an excuse to do makeup or fool around. They are able to cope well with the historical and technical aspects of the study. The whole school is rewarded by this integrity when the groups take one-minute routines into classrooms during the last 'dog-days' of the school year.

June, 1991

This month I see each class only four times as the exam schedule begins the middle of the second week. I schedule us to complete tasks which require a group

effort: putting away the department equipment, discarding and sorting old costumes, removing materials from the walls and bulletin boards, returning the stacking chairs to the gymnasium. We reverse time in the room and erase the physical evidence of our year's energy. This moment always draws comments from the students as they recall where they visualised themselves in 'other places and other times'. Now is the time for reflecting on the whole year... to capture, if we can, the tapestry woven with the threads of creativity each of us brought to the others.

The evaluative requirements are threefold:

1. for the students to assess their own contribution growth and understanding
2. for them to share with me their thoughts on this 'new' approach
3. for me to evaluate my own growth and contributions to the class and to satisfy the administrative requirements of assigning a letter grade to these experiences.

My feelings at the culmination of the year are satisfaction, accomplishment, confidence, and anticipation

of next year. Because we have examined fewer topics in considerable detail, the year seems to have been more connected somehow - that we have made logical progress in a way we collectively determined. Students and I remark that we all learned more about a variety of things and that the depth with which we explored the topics was preferable to a scattered, multi-topic approach.

I am grateful to the students for being genuinely interested in the work and for being straightforward, insightful and honest in the evaluation of the year. Naturally, there are some whose disappointment at the lack of 'old familiar stuff' is evident; interestingly enough, other students make the observation that this style of drama encourages the potential of everyone, and that even shy students contributed far more this year than they had before.

I end the year with some questions which will take some time to reflect on. I will consider what I need to work on to help me in my journey along this path, for I am now certain that I must do so to create a satisfying career experience for myself. Also pertinent becomes the question of how best to share the knowledge I've acquired through the study. It seems that drama, at its best, is the interaction of human beings in an authentic, relevant

way, and I think this could be extended to collegial relationships.

The students provide insights into their drama experiences over the last few years in comparison to the work of 1990-91. In their final evaluation, (see appendix), and in interviews (see transcript), I see patterns emerging which lend support to the theories I've relied on this year:

This year was more serious and in depth than last year.

I think you pay more attention when your input is really important.

It has become harder, more challenging than before.

In the teaching, there was less supervision, more instruction and creative freedom this year.

Students have come to realize that drama isn't all theatre sports and improv.

At the beginning, I thought that I wouldn't be given many opportunities to participate, I thought that would be only a select group of students.

It has gotten harder and we have become more open.

More of what students wanted was used.

Much wider range of subjects this year.

I thought drama would put you on the spot, it doesn't.

We have become more able to freely talk to the teacher.

The units are longer and we go deeper in to find new things in every class.

Finally:

This year there is more focus on learning.

... and I smile, for my journey has brought me to a place I'd like to spend time exploring.

6. Summary

This study has described a year of exploration and discovery which sprang from my need to find in my teaching what Dorothy Heathcote has termed 'authenticity'. The full intention of the journey was to determine if a change in teaching paradigm could offer a depth and significance I only intuitively sensed was missing. The data, collected in the form of student journals, reflective writing, writing in role, field notes and interviews was analyzed to extract the general feeling arising from the new approach.

This new methodology, called drama in education, which by nature is a process of discovery and reflection, with the main objective to bring about a change in thinking, provided a suitable model for the study. I did not know, in the beginning, what the outcome of the year's work would be. Dorothy Heathcote's words convey the appropriateness of using the act of reflection as a learning tool:

It is not the doing - it is the considerations underlying the doing.

It is not the saying - it is the effect of the saying.

It is not merely telling people what you want them to learn, it is the experience arising out of the action which enables them to learn. (p.200)

It was necessary for me to depart from previous thinking styles and to adapt as much as possible to the thinking embedded in the above quote in order to understand the path I was following. I needed to learn that reflection is as much a part of the beginning of the journey as the end, and that it must be constant throughout for the journey to be of value. What I discovered in the process made it easy to want to continue the journey.

Conclusions

This study supports a number of conclusions about both teachers and learners. It is abundantly clear that drama is a two-way process of exploration; the agenda cannot be totally imposed by the teacher for true drama work to be taking place. Each party brings with it the raw material to be fashioned into new, relevant understanding about the human condition. Dramatic activity nurtures the need all people have to locate themselves in the human community, to understand their own potential and to

creatively explore the art of interaction.

I believe that students want to contribute in a meaningful way to their own learning, but that the current system creates enormous roadblocks to this potential.

Eisner (1979) describes personal relevance as a learning orientation which "places tremendous responsibility on the teacher". This is in contrast to traditional methodologies in which "prescribed content and predetermined routines and testing procedures in many ways lighten the teacher's load. They also lighten the intellectual load the students must bear" (p.60).

Two things emerged strongly from the student writing about the year:

- 1) that students want and need to be involved actively in the learning process
- 2) that students are willing and able to assume responsibility for relevant learning and meaning which is negotiated

There were very few comments from students indicating dissatisfaction with the approach. Those comments which did arise had more to do with a desire for brief encounters with Theatre Sports than a return to a steady diet of them. On the whole the level of involvement from all students, including those who would formerly have been

labelled as disruptive, was notably increased over previous years.

The list of teacher realizations is somewhat longer and must be considered as personal opinions only, arising from my observations about myself during the year. They are offered here as evidence of personal growth and of evolving understanding of the field.

- 1) Teacher needs to really listen to and invite the input of students
- 2) Teacher must opt for meaningful activities not time fillers
- 3) Teacher must begin to articulate knowledge and questions with colleagues
- 4) Teacher needs to engage in constant self-reflection
- 5) Teacher must meet knowledge in a personal way
- 6) Teacher must commit to keeping up with current thinking in the field

These two lists indicate a shift in the general tone and intention of both parties that is recognizably different from prior years. General conclusions drawn by both me and the students about the students are summarized in the following section. Any segment of this collection might be expanded into a more detailed rendering, but that

activity is beyond the scope of this study.

One of the easiest points to recognize early on in the year was that the general attitude of students had shifted to a much more conscientious one; this was evidenced by few behaviour problems during class, and increased commitment to the work and an increased level of input from all students. Students were far more open to sharing personal experiences relevant to the content we happened to be studying and this improved student/student as well as student/teacher relationships.

Often mentioned in the student writing was an increased comfort level in the performance mode; once the work took on personal meaning, it became easier to share with others. Students also felt that their understanding of what drama could be had changed; they felt that they had higher expectations of themselves and other students, particularly after seeing what they all were capable of achieving.

Some students recognized that this method is also more challenging for the teacher, who must be extremely well-prepared and flexible. All of these developments created a circular effect in the way the year unfolded, as obviously the actual management of the class was not an issue. The students indicated through their response early

on that they were excited by the approach, which made it easy to continue exploring.

The year probably had the most profound effect and lasting consequences on me as teacher/learner. Simply from the act of listening more and using 'teacher talk' less, I was able to broaden my understanding of my own role and the role of the students in the classroom. Since the teacher cannot necessarily predict what the responses of the students will lead to, the listening becomes an essential component of the creative process as the choices for further action emerge from the work in progress. This eliminates boredom from the workplace instantly!

I found that by using certain conventions to slow the work down, I helped myself and the students to recognize the significance of the 'moment', without the pressure to press toward the outcome as a sole objective. In a real way, the whole classroom experience became more human, connected and stimulating for me. I was thrilled to be able to use my 'storehouse' of personal knowledge of 'things' to heighten meaning for the classes. I relied more often on intuition to help me solve problems in my own way, not feeling that I would find the answer in a resource book somewhere.

The organization of time was eased by planning

strategies which involved schemes of work, not one-shot lessons. So while the planning took much longer to start with, the work fed itself once started. Assessment became a pleasure, as it meant real, honest feedback from the students on their understanding of their own work. I could invent new ways of seeing and reading the efforts of the class without the arbitrary assignment of 'marks out of ten', which I had never been satisfied with.

In the end, I discovered that I am now a much happier teacher; reconnected to creativity, more intense and passionate about my subject area than ever, and ready to take the next step of the journey as it presents itself.

Implications

The implications to be made from this study have consequences for curriculum planners, school board hiring officers and both specialist and generalist teachers. The inevitable question is: "If this is such an effective method of teaching, why is it not more widely practised?"

There are several possible responses, depending on which of the aforementioned categories of people is being addressed.

First, the work is demanding. It requires a teacher to be dedicated to extracting minute detail from events

which are ordinary to make them extraordinary. This is not a method which forgives the "here is a situation, go away and make a scene about it" or "another theatre sports game is..." or "these are your new scripts, you have seven classes to prepare them" type of thinking. Here, the teacher thinks first.

The work cannot be done from recipe cards. ie., "101 Drama Ideas for the Secondary Classroom".

The educational drama teacher is required to combine broad knowledge with a clear understanding of the dramatic art form; in other words, the teacher must be able to use the art form from experiencing mode to demonstrating mode, to teach about things through drama.

The teacher must learn to read the needs of the class as opposed to predetermining the program. This implies overcoming the fear of thinking on your feet, and joining in the learning process as a participant at the discovery level sometimes, not as a director.

Constant assessment is necessary regarding the important learning areas for the students. It is also essential to examine evaluation practices on an ongoing basis. The study has prompted me to explore a model of assessment which relies heavily on self assessment by the students. I now feel that the most accurate and fair form

of evaluation is provided by anecdotal reporting.

School boards and administrators need to look at the learning objectives of their districts when making decisions to hire teachers with educational drama background over teachers whose dominant focus is theatre arts and actor-training.

Those whose responsibility is scheduling need to recognize that drama does not bend easily to the fifty or sixty-minute block of time it is most often allocated.

The work is not served by being taught in a single course at university or through fragmented workshops. The process of development requires a process of accumulating theory, exercising it in the classroom, reflecting on the process as it is occurring and analyzing the work at critical stages. Then it requires returning to the theorists to encounter their knowledge at a new level. What does it take to train drama teachers? More than is currently accessible.

Recommendations for further study

The year has revealed a number of possibilities for future studies. For instance, there is not a sufficient body of research detailing the general strategies behind teacher thinking. The detail with which the drama teacher

must plan, not only in preparing material for use, but also during a lesson, requires a unique set of skills. It would be of interest for a study to examine and analyze the levels of teacher thinking in a practical manner.

Another area of interest exists in the progressive development of students. A study could be done on the actual growth that evolves in students taught by this method over a number of years. It would be interesting to compare such development and understanding of the art form with a group of students taught with a skills-based approach.

It would also be revealing to know how the educational drama approach affects, in the long term, the perceptions a student has when encountering culture; ie. is there a heightened awareness of techniques in film, does the acquired knowledge inspire more frequent attendance, and connoisseurship, of theatre?

Finally, it is essential to produce more investigative literature from inside the classroom. Educators must take greater responsibility for examining their own practices and making meaning from what they know.

Concluding Remarks

The duration of this study presented me with an opportunity for discovery, a possibility in any journey. Yet, travelling on this path has meant something quite special: it is a road which doesn't take me back to the place I came from, it only leads on to the next destination.

An experienced traveller knows the richness afforded by the gathering of new experiences, and how each foray into new territory increases the confidence one has to complete future explorations. I feel eager now to apply the knowledge I acquired through this study. A period of reflection is necessary to allow the memory to filter the accumulated information, a settling process which makes it ready to surface when it is needed. In drama terms, this is a time of reflection, a savouring of all the components experienced; the taste of a new culture.

As this part of the journey concludes, the next step is already beginning.

Epilogue

It would be useful for the interested reader to locate the M.A. thesis of Susann Baum (1991). The work explores the issues discussed in this study as they relate to the senior secondary drama program.

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APPENDIX A

An Approach to "A Midsummer Night's Dream"

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Rationale

A sequence of lessons for moving into the text of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" with secondary students.

The approach used in this series of lessons focuses on drama as a vehicle for learning. It requires no acting ability of the students, no formal theatre training and no need for excessive and unnecessary properties. It does, however, establish a sensitivity to the economical use of theatrical elements and an appreciation of the art form. Involvement in these experiences is personalized and committed.

It is helpful for the teacher to utilize the nuances of voice, a keen sense of pacing, intuitive "reading" of the class and, at all times, to maintain an empathy and interest in the experiences of the students.

Teachers must help their students to recognize that "acting" is not the intention, rather it is hoped that each individual will respond truthfully to each new development. Through this approach, students can begin to refine their understanding of theatrical elements, while deepening their understanding of the text.

We have attempted to illuminate certain concepts of

the play in detail, particularly the notions of love, power and illusion.

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

Focus : to provide background information on Elizabethan times and a summary of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (known hereafter as M.N.D.)

Materials : tape recorder

taped selection of music with dreamlike quality

(approx 2 minutes)

1. Teacher asks students to sit in circle on the floor.
 2. Teacher gives information on Elizabethan times as presented below. It is not necessary to provide more information than this at this time.
- "A.M.N.D" was written in approx. 1595 by William Shakespeare
 - New World recently discovered; exploration increasing
 - illiteracy common, people still tended to believe strongly in traditions, local customs and superstitions
 - Elizabeth I was queen, thus "Elizabethan" era

- the levels of power were clearly understood by all; both in government and family life
- fathers were the unquestioned heads of the household; daughters and wives had little power
- Midsummer Night occurred between dusk June 23 and dawn June 24, presenting an occasion for merrymaking, superstition, dancing and pageantry.
- Midsummer Night was a time when Elizabethan audiences would willingly believe in the superstition that the great heat of summer left men's minds open to madness.

3. Teacher: " Everyone now find a comfortable sleeping position on the floor, eyes closed, arranged in a circle. I'm going to turn the lights out and tell you a story."

Play tape (ask students to imagine they are lying in a forest)

4. Teacher : (read as written)*

"This is a story about several groups of people whose lives become entangled one evening in midsummer. Four young lovers escape into the forest where they become the entertainment of the King of the Fairies, Oberon and his mischeivous assistant, Puck. The lovers have come to the forest to be free from the eyes of their parents, and are

unaware of the eyes that watch them now. The fairy King and his Queen are quarreling and the enchanted forest becomes their battleground. At the same time, the forest has become the rehearsal space for a group of uncouth tradesmen who intend to produce a play to celebrate the upcoming marriage of the King of Athens, Theseus."

* as this is not teacher in role, it is suggested that the text be followed as its economical framework avoids confusion.

PART TWO

A Walk in the Forest

Focus: to clearly establish the setting of the play

Materials: 2 large sheets of paper for each group of 6

2-3 assorted felt pens per group

A. BRAINSTORM

1. Teacher: "Please get into groups of 6.

Quickly create a list on the first sheet of paper of all the things that come to your minds about enchanted forests.

Include: feelings
 objects
 ideas
 things that could happen to
 you

You have 1 minute."

** if you feel the class needs slightly longer extend time

Group Management : Assign a recorder
 reporter

... BEFORE starting

2. Teacher : Now, your group spokesperson will share what
 you feel are the most significant items on your list.

* caution students not to repeat what has been said, and
 that the last group might therefore have quite a short
 list.

Class shares lists

* Teacher should try to extract the most important items
 from the list, including such things as hiding, spells,
 potions, magic, being watched, fairies, etc.

B. MAP/ PICTURE

This series explores the visual representation of the
 forest.

1. Teacher:" We're going to use some of these ideas in a
 minute, but first, let's talk briefly about the notions of
 love, power and illusion and the symbols that we recognize

to represent them."

Discussion of symbols

2. Teacher : "Now, with the ideas that you've heard, your group will create a map, or picture, on the 2nd sheet of paper that depicts an enchanted forest. Within it, the notions of love and illusion are represented, and outside the boundaries of the forest, power and authority are shown. Include somewhere in the forest the idea of watching and being watched."

* Allow sufficient time for this: gauge the energy of the class

Post all maps around room

3. Teacher: "Representatives will now share your map with the class, being sure to indicate where on the map we should see power, love and illusion."

Share maps

Discuss the use of symbols that occ

C. MAGIC POTION

1. Teacher : "Can you think of occasions when spells and potions are used and for what reasons someone might want

to use them?

General Discussion: elicit such ideas as fairy tales, mad scientists, love stories; revenge, control, to change the future

2. Teacher: Both spells and a love potion appear in A.M.N.D.

In new groups of 6 now, write a spell of 3-4 lines which are intended to make someone fall in love. You are to * prepare to cast the spell in the most effective way you can devise, over the rest of the class.

It is important for your group to decide on how the class should be positioned when they fall under spell.

* don't rush this

3. Each group casts spell over others in turn.

Discussion

What are your thoughts and feelings about power after doing this exercise?

What do you notice about the use of language?

How did each of the groups use space?

D. TABLEAU:

Divide class into 2 groups

Each group will create a still picture which represents the map.

Someplace in your picture you must suggest love, power, watching and illusion/fantasy.

Museum exercise

1. Ask the 1st group to set up their picture
2. tell the rest of the class to find a friend to speak to as they observe the statue...they are to WHISPER only to each other and share any and all the impressions they "read" in the still pic.
3. after a suitable length of observation, have the class share aloud what they think they have seen.
4. have the still picture relax to explain itself.
5. repeat with other half.

Discussion

1. Where in your life do you experience being influenced by power?
 2. In what forms do we find illusion/fantasy in our lives?
 3. What kinds of love are there?
- * any of the above questions might extend into a journal writing assignment.

PART THREE

Who Holds the Power?

Focus: a comparison of authority within families in modern
and ancient times

Materials: chairs

A. MODERN SITUATION

1. Teacher : " get into groups of 3, please"
" arrange 3 chairs in a form that would indicate that 2
people are in conflict and 1 person is there to help solve
the problem."

1. the roles are a graduating student, the father of the
student and the school counsellor.
2. the situation is that you, the student have decided to
go to university after graduating, but your father
wants you to take over his business. He has called
this meeting with the school counsellor to try to
convince you to change your mind. You are
humiliated and embarrassed by your father's outspoken
behaviour.

"Go ahead with the meeting ,now."

Discussion

What did you observe happening in this encounter?

(ask each role in turn starting with the student)

* hopefully the responses will include...power, authority, suppression, determination, resentment, helplessness,etc.)

B. TEXT BASED

Materials: chairs

banners of the following posted around room randomly:

- a) King: " To you your father should be as a god"
Theseus
- b) Father: "As she is mine I may dispose of her"
Egeus
- c) Daughter: "I would my father looked but with my
Hermia eyes"

1. Teacher: "Stay in your roles from the last exercise, but the counsellor becomes the King. Egeus, the father has arranged a marriage for his daughter which she strongly opposes. He wishes Theseus to make a decision."

"Show this meeting from beginning to end, but each person may only speak once, to say their line at an appropriate time. Decide as a group in what order and why."

Show all scenes

Discussion

What were some of the different choices groups made to make the ideas clear to the audience?

(placement of chairs, order of lines, entrances, exits, ie, the action: was it logical?)

* this provides an opportunity to discuss theatre elements

PART FOUR

The Lovers

Focus: to introduce the lovers

Materials: chairs (essential)

copy of text passage for each student

Activity Description: Interpretive Gesturing

Students are asked to interpret a short piece of text, utilizing only upper body. They are to remain seated throughout and are permitted to move only arms, hands, and upper trunk. They may rotate in chair. The face must remain expressionless.

This is not an opportunity to MIME, rather actions are representational and abstract. Avoid the use of cliché and convention.

* Teacher must demonstrate an interpretation of one or two lines

1. Teacher sets up four chairs in straight line.
2. Call a volunteer up to represent each character as they are introduced. (this exercise is to make clear which gender matches each name).

"We know that Hermia (girl takes one of the seats) is in love with Lysander (boy takes seat next to Hermia).

We know that Demetrius (a boy take seat on other side of Hermia) loves Hermia and has been given the right to claim her as his bride.

The last lover, but unloved, is Helena (takes remaining seat next to Demetrius), who is blindly devoted to Demetrius, who rejects her."

Lysander Hermia Demetrius Helena

Interpretive Gesturing Exercise

1. Teacher explains the exercise as above.
2. Class is divided into groups of four preferably two boys, two girls.
3. Each student receives copy of the text and characters assigned.
4. Teacher does demonstration of interpretation of first two or three lines.
5. Students interpret entire passage in their groups.

And often in the woods where you and I
 Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie,
 Emptying our bosoms of their council sweet,
 There Lysander and myself shall meet,
 And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
 To seek new friends and stranger companies.
 Farewell, sweet playfellow. Pray thou for
 us;

And good luck grant thee they Demetrius!
 Keep word, Lysander. We must starve our sight
 From Lover's food till tomorrow deep midnight.

Notes : Teacher will narrate story while groups do presentation of work. Teacher reminds class to take time and not miss any of the action or meaning of passage. Teacher cautions class that they are not acting but representing. Teacher reminds class why the lovers are going into the forest.

* allow plenty of time for this exercise.

SHARE ALL SCENES

Discussion

How did each group clearly represent the relationships between the lovers?

* this is an opportunity to emphasize use of space and action

PART FIVE

The Players

Focus: to introduce the play within the play
 the concept of dual roles
 an understanding of the comic elements

Materials: A copy of the prologue for each
 student
 list of tradesman and corresponding
 player

Introduction: Teacher introduces laborers

"Also in the forest is a group of men who are laborers. They are in the forest to secretly rehearse a play to offer their king Theseus and his bride Hippolyta on their wedding day. These are rough coarse tradesmen who are very anxious to please their king so they tend to overdo even the slightest action. They are perfect examples of what we would call "hams."

Distribute copy of prologue and character list
(see following page)

Instructions: In groups of six, choose characters from the list and as the prologue is being narrated create the action which goes with the text in the most exaggerated manner possible. When you get to the end of the prologue, FREEZE, being sure to capture the elements of exaggeration in the statues.

SHARE ALL SCENES

Discussion

Caricature

Comedy/Tragedy

Buffoonery...enjoyment of others discomfort

PART SIX

The Fairy Kingdom

Focus: to explore the ideas of power

jealousy

magic spells and potions

Materials: poster of:

"The next thing she waking
Looks upon
She shall pursue with the soul
Of love."

INTRODUCTION: The forest also holds a kingdom of fairies. The King, Oberon and his Queen, Titania meet unexpectedly in the forest at a time when they are having a lover's spat. The fairies love to create havoc for the purpose of entertaining themselves.

Instructions: In pairs, create the action of the meeting of Oberon and Titania which leads up to the text above being spoken by Oberon. The ideas of jealousy, power and a love potion must be used.

* allow sufficient time

SHARE ALL SCENES

Discussion

How does love affect behavior?

PART SEVEN

TYING THE KNOT: CONCLUSION

Focus: to show the resolution of all the confusion

Materials: poster: "So shall all the couples
three

Ever true in loving be."

INTRODUCTION: Eventually all the lovers were round in the forest by Theseus, Hippolyta and Egeus and all were forgiven for their disobedience. The magic of the fairies was able to unite everyone satisfactorily and they all lived happily ever after.

B. A WEDDING PORTRAIT

- Teacher:
- a. Divide class into three equal groups.
 - b. Each group is to create a wedding portrait of the three couples just married.
 - c. Groups must distinguish between the wedding party and the wedding guests. The wedding party consists of Theseus/Hippolyta, Hermia/Lysander, and Helena/Demetrius.
 - d. Have class arrange the space to represent a palace reception area where each group must enter into the hall through an established entranceway.
 - e. Each group will enter the hall and set up their portrait for the rest of the class to see.

The final step in the sequence is to have all groups create their tableaux simultaneously while the teacher speaks the following passage:

"If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended:
That you have but slumb'ed here,
While these visions did appear."

This is the end of the sequence. Teachers would now move into a further exploration of the text.

APPENDIX B

Interview with Grade Ten Students

June 18, 1991

L: This is really informal and I appreciate you being able to do this. I just really wanted to get some more information so I can improve my own understanding of what's happened this year. That's all this is. So, if I ask you a few questions then I would also like you to ask me some questions because I think you probably have some questions about how things went! (students chuckle) I'm not taking notes, it's all on tape. What I'd like to start with is if you noticed a general difference in the tone of the class this year compared to last?

#1: For me it was a really big difference because I was in a 9/10 split class and this year with straight 10 I got to know everyone really well. In drama, you get really close. You always have to work with people and trust them.

L: Is there something special about the way you work with people in drama as opposed to other classes that helps those relationships work better?

- #1: You completely have to trust the person - it's a complete relationship - you get to know people's insides, what they're thinking and feeling. You're completely open - you just have to be to survive.
- #2: It was a little hard the first two months because we were used to different areas - architect/monastery thing - hard to get into the swing of it. But that was really the molding, it got us together for the stuff ahead.
- L: Did you find that's what happened that because you were working as a whole class group that you came together faster as a group than you would have if we'd done it the way we used to where we did a warmup and then something else and an improvisation. Did that have an effect on how you gelled?
- #1: I liked the warmup the first year.
- L: Yes and it's okay to do that. Did you find there were times in the role drama where there was enough physical action to keep you alert?
- #1: Yes in the tableaux but not in the monk unit.

- L: That has been the most universally hated unit I've ever done. Except there was some really good work that came out of that.
- #1: And some of the people you got to do things like _____ as the stranger really opened him up a little more because he was really taken in and it forced him to be in a situation where he really had to open up.
- #2: The architect thing really opened _____ right up. The thing that was hard for me was that last year it was structured but it was always jumping from topic to topic and it wasn't in depth. It was hard at the beginning to get into this suddenly in-depth stuff.
- L: Once you got over the fact that it wasn't going to be like last year (and I think that was fairly early on), what did it feel like?
- #2: At first I thought "I don't like this" but once a section was done, you'd look back and realize how much you'd learned. There were always parts where you'd think: "I like this or I like this" but then you'd look back and see that what you'd liked , you'd learned on and what you didn't like

you'd learned even more on.

#1: Yah, I'd agree with that - we learned a lot this year and when we were doing the monk think, I didn't think it was very interesting but I learned so much about characterization and how important it is. "The Crucible" - that was so great. I loved that so much how we had to go into the family groups. It was so wonderful - the importance of being so concentrated on it you can't go off the topic or else it's not interesting and I always get mad that in school, there are people who don't really want to be there. Sometimes people do get out of the role and then it's not as realistic.

L: Let me ask a question directly related to that. Do you think that the level of commitment, even by the people who weren't here to take it seriously increased because of the kinds of activities we were doing?

#1: Yes, for the most part - it worked really well.

L: By doing the role drama before we looked at the text - did that help your understanding?

#1: I think it may have dwelled on it a little too long.

#2: Also with that - you made up your own scenes, got your own story line in your head, and then when you read the actual text it was different.

L: Did you find it too hard to make a shift?

#1: No, it was okay.

L: If you find that you are working with people who are only semi-committed to the work, do you find if you increase your own level of communication to the drama that this will help draw them in as well?

#1: Yes definitely - when we were working on the natives issue. I yelled at one of the group a lot because he was goofing around - and he would never listen; but if I actually just went and started doing it, then he would start to adapt. So I found that shouting wasn't good.

#2: What I find I have a hard time with is accepting other people's levels. For me, if I'm on a certain level, I want to go with it rather than hold back.

- #1: That's also part of the thing that some people think drama is an easy course so they're not on the same level.
- L: In your understanding about what people are saying, when they talk about drama now what do they say? What do they notice about the changes in the course?
- #2: Over the last year, I think that the attitude toward the course is: it's not fun and games, I mean, it is but that's not all it is.
- L: Where do you find that the best work came out of this year. What moments do you think people worked the hardest, not where they had the most fun but where did the creative potential of all the people get drawn out the most.
- #2: I think when they understood what was going on like the Commedia dell'arte where with the native one or the monks, by the time you'd understand, the unit was over.
- L: So there's a lot of struggling to get to the meat of the material.
- #2: And when you get to that then you build on that.

#1: I think the strong work came from the commedia, because of smaller groups people practiced well and the night performance was so great. Also, when we had that theater sports group, people were saying "I forget how to do this" so I'd suggest that one day a month should be just theatre sports.

L: Uh huh, I see. I think that I was so anxious to see what would happen if I divorced theatre sports from class...I didn't see that there were so many people who think that's what drama's all about. By taking that out, I was removing any kind of familiarity they had in the class.

#1: But it was good that you did that because now they appreciate the other side.

#2: I think the Louis Riel thing was our strongest because the last tableaux were so strong.

L: Rememberance Day?

#1: When we were doing it, I'd think "Oh, this is nothing" but when I look back at each thing, I think that each unit was very strong - (tape interrupted)

- #2: The thing about theatre sports - people said they'd forgotten how to play the games, but I think that through the year, it brought up the improvisation level, they're improvisation ability was higher without the games.
- #2: It's good tying in the work like Riel to other classes. You can remember things for other subjects.
- #2: With Riel we could look at different perspectives, not just the textbook.
- #1: The teacher has to have a lot of knowledge. You gave us a lot of background to build on - we had more of a chance to do something with the information this year than last.
- L: Is that a lot different than what was happening last year?
- #3: Last year we did a lot of improvisation; this year, I think people got more out of it because there are people who aren't very good at improvisation. This year we had a much wider range to excel in.
- #2: Plus, I've yet to see a 'serious improvisation' - everyone goes for being funny. Plus with theatre sports, you're not

really focused - the thing I learned from the monks was how to focus yourself.

L: What did you think of me being in role with you?

#3: I think it helped because if we'd just done it ourselves, it would have fallen apart, people would have started to laugh and not gotten into character. With you there, people were quiet and focused.

#2: Plus, a student can play an adult, but for other students to believe that another student is supposedly older is harder to do - it's easier with an actual adult.

L: When you were doing role dramas, what did you notice about being the character or developing the character?

#3: You could make your own character.

#4: You're not interpreting someone else's picture of someone else. It's your picture of who you are during that role drama.

#2: When you said we would be writing our own scripts there were

a lot of ah's (groans), but I think it's easier than working from a text. You also get better results when it's your own stuff.

L: Let's talk about the writing process a little. When we did "The Crucible", we did write some monologue (hidden thoughts).

#2: That was interesting because it brought out that not everything is spoken to the other person and it was hard to bring out what you don't normally say.

#4: Lots of people find it hard to say what they're thinking or believe what other people are thinking. If you just write what you think it flows, it sounds stronger but natural.

L: Where were the most believable events?

#2: The architect moment was for me the most believable for me the whole year.

#3: I think the one I most remember was when I was one of the girls in the Crucible unit and we had to go off and say if we were guilty or not of being there.

#4: I liked the architect thing too. _____ did such a good job of being who he was that you knew exactly what you needed to do.

L: Did you ever feel that there was a pressure on you to 'perform'.

#3: No.

L: Is it valid to use drama as a way of studying issues?

#2: Yes but we don't want it to be a current affairs class either!

L: I'm afraid our time is up. Thank you very much for sharing these comments with me; it helps me alot to see the year from your eyes.