# CHILDREN'S CONCEPTIONS OF DRAMA IN EDUCATION

by

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# ABSTRACT

This study has been an investigation of children's views of drama in education. It invited children to reflect on the dramatic process as used by a classroom teacher in the context of integrated units of study. The specific research question addressed was:

What are children's conceptions of drama when used by a non-specialist classroom teacher as an integral part of learning?

Children, ages 10-12 years, were observed and then interviewed in a semi-structured manner. The data were analyzed according to the phenomenographical research methodology. This suited the intent of the study in that the aim of phenomenography is to discover and describe the world as seen by participants. The results were presented in the form of conceptions which are descriptions representing the various ways people view, experience or conceptualize their experiences. Seven such conceptions, falling into three different groups, were discovered. The first group identified three ways in which children viewed drama as a purposeful strategy used by a teacher: (a) drama is a tool, (b) drama is a way of linking, and (c) drama is a novel way of teaching. The second group identified three ways in which children viewed themselves participating in the dramatic process: (a) drama is something one must take part in, (b) drama is play, and (c) drama takes on a life of its own. The third group dealt with one specific area of drama and identified role taking as being like the donning of a cloak.

Insights from the study centered around three major observations: (a) the importance of understanding the meaning making of learners, (b) the importance of reflection, and (c) the power of drama in education as an educational strategy. Implications for educators and recommendations for further research were derived from these themes.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# 1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study is about children's reflections. It is about their reflections on their learning in drama when drama is an integral part of their classroom life. The specific question addressed is:

> What are children's conceptions of drama when used by a non-specialist classroom teacher as an integral part of learning?

The study offers a point of departure for considerations such as:

1. the variety of views and interpretations that children hold regarding drama in education;

2. how these views and interpretations relate to and influence the children's participation in drama;

3. how these views and interpretations influence the learning which is supported by drama.

The impetus for the study came from my curiosity about children's experiences in drama. In the past decade I have been teaching in a regular classroom at the intermediate level. Drama became a way of providing opportunities for children to experience multiple perspectives and a way of personalizing historical and fictional events. I enjoyed drama in education because of the intense involvement it offered me and my students. My excitement about the process made me wonder about the involvement of the students. Observing them and analyzing the products that arose from dramatic activity provided a window into their world. Listening to them and interacting with them during or after the lessons also provided clues into what they were experiencing. It was these insights and my desire to understand more fully how the children were making sense of drama, that lead to this study. What is the nature of meaning making for children in the dramatic process? This curiosity was also

supported by a belief that drama in education can be effectively used by generalist teachers, like myself, who have had some training in drama in education.

Drama is a powerful means of involving children in a very direct way in their learning. It allows children to engage fully in activities by identifying with fictional situations, by taking a role, by speaking, acting, and thinking "in the shoes of someone else". While its long term aim is to help the students understand themselves and the world in which they live, the immediate power of drama lies in the creation of meaning from the direct experience of the participant. This cognitive process is supported by the engagement of the affective domain (Davis & Lawrence, 1986). Emotions are an integral part of the success of a drama, and it is only when participants are recalling or evoking true feelings that drama can begin (Ibid).

Over the past decades, writings and research have appeared in the area of drama in education. However, little research has focussed directly on the voice of the child. This is understandable, since the field of drama in education is relatively young and has needed the support of writings explaining the methodologies in order for understanding and acceptance to occur. While drama has been a part of provincial language arts documents in the past as part of the literature strand (Province of British Columbia, 1978, 1981), the appearance of the Elementary Fine Arts Guide in British Columbia (Province of British Columbia, 1985) provided a fuller view of drama both as an art form and as a learning medium that can stand in its own right. Other documents followed, thus placing drama in the mainstream of educational practice (Province of British Columbia, 1985, 1986a, 1986b, 1988, 1990b, 1990c).

Researchers in the field have tended to focus on the effect of drama upon the development of children's language, learning and thinking. A major action-research study in Tasmania (National Association for Drama in Education, 1984) investigated the influence of drama on the development of children's language, thinking and learning and produced the

following findings: drama when defined as thinking, talking and doing within imagined improvised situations with others is shown to:

1. stimulate children's language and thinking;

2. raise moral and value issues;

3. enable children to connect learning from curriculum areas to the everyday world.

While the study involved the children in frank discussions about drama and credits them with being an important part of the project, their input does not constitute the central source for analysis or description.

Wagner (1988, 1989), in a review of research of dramatic activity, found that studies tended to be product-oriented rather than reflective of the recent movements in oral language and literacy towards studies that are qualitative and hypothesis-generating. She concluded that there is a need for research which encompasses direct observations of drama in the classroom and its effects on learners; research which allows learning to be seen from within the drama by children, research which provides "richly detailed descriptions that capture the immediacy and power of the student's struggle to make meaning" (1989, p. 23). This study will provide one such work in that the results will be a description of the children's interpretations of dramatic experiences.

While drama in education may appear at first to be different from other subject areas, there are similarities with the work of educators such as Ashton-Warner (1963), Wasserman (1978), and with the work in areas such as the process approach to writing (Atwell, 1987, 1990; Calkins, 1983; Graves, 1983) and language development (Jagger & Smith-Burke, 1985; Wells, 1986). Teachers of drama believe in the power of collaboration, active involvement of the learners, and reflection. They see themselves primarily in the role of facilitators. In the past, teachers have tended to maintain a high degree of control over the learning in the classroom. Activities were structured in routine ways with clearly determined roles. With the growing recognition of the array of skills and

prior knowledge that children bring to the classroom, teachers of all subject areas are moving towards more facilitative modes of interaction with children in the educational process. The teacher's role is shifting from being a "sage on the stage" to being "a guide on the side."

Drama in education offers a wide variety of opportunities for teachers and students to co-create and to reflect on active experience. As an art form, drama presents opportunities for exploration through metaphor, symbolism, silence and tension. It encourages the harnessing of the imagination and the full engagement of the affective domain. As a teaching medium it can provide a context for integration of learning through which different points of view can be experienced, and where speaking, listening, reading and writing can occur with purpose.

**PURPOSE**

The intent of this study, therefore, is to examine the views of children on the process of drama in education by having children reflect on the dramatic experience. One of the most important elements of a drama is reflection. Although leaders in the field have frequently referred to the value of reflection, no in-depth investigation has been undertaken to explore the results of reflection with and by the children. The interest in this study is in obtaining information on how the dramatic process is seen by children to affect their learning, their social interactions and the climate of the classroom.

**EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Gaining information from children regarding the process of drama in education is important for a number of reasons. Psychologists have long seen the value of accepting that people's thinking is logical when seen on its own premises (Smedslund, 1970). There is a growing recognition throughout the field of education of the value of children's insights on

their learning, both for themselves and for educators. Children are no longer viewed as empty receptacles, but as participants in the educational process.

Drama is a highly co-creative process. It involves the teacher and the children creating experiences together and reflecting upon them. It follows that research on the relationships that exist between the learner and the experience has value.

For teachers, being aware of children's thinking processes at any time during a unit of study can have important pedagogical implications. It can assist a teacher in surmising where misunderstandings or difficulties are occurring and where support is needed to allow the child to move forward.

## METHODS

To undertake this study a phenomenographical approach was chosen. This is appropriate since the aim of this methodology is to find, describe, analyze and understand the experiences as seen from the individual's point of view. Thus the approach was seen as concurrent with my intentions in pursuing this investigation. Semi-structured interviews were held with 15 individual children. A series of questions was designed for the purpose of providing some unity in the interviews. By inviting the children to share their insights into the process of drama and their reflections on the effect of drama on their learning and on their lives, it was my hope that underlying conceptions would be surfaced. Interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed to obtain the data for the study.

The 15 children were from a grade 5/6 class in a Lower Mainland school. The 15 children were chosen from a class of 27 to represent as diverse set of views as possible on the dramatic process. This is consistent with the phenomenographic approach in that the aim is to find the greatest number of variations within the data. While the children were all from one class and had the same set of experiences, it was through the reading and re-

reading of the data that 15 of the interviews were ultimately deemed to be most appropriate for the study.

This study is descriptive and exploratory. It is hoped that the both the description of the journey and the results will be of interest to educators and researchers.

## LIMITATIONS

The study is a descriptive one and is influenced by my interpretations. Therefore, it is possible that another researcher would uncover a different set of conceptions and project other implications from the results. The same limitation applies to the overlapping nature of the conceptions as described in this study: it is possible that aspects of the descriptions could be further discovered and refined by further research.

Throughout the interviews it was evident that for some children the abstract nature of some of the questions was challenging. This raises the notion of developmental appropriateness of the task. When viewed from a Piagetian perspective (Donaldson, 1978; Jacob, 1984), children ages 10-12 years are most likely to be in the stage of concrete operational thought. This means that they are capable of thinking about their thinking and reflecting on their experiences. From this point of view, this study is developmentally appropriate. One of the parameters of this stage is that, while the child at this age is a logical thinker, the basis for thinking is reality and is bound to the concrete. For children who are beginning to move from the stage of concrete operations into the stage of formal operations, flexibility in thought processes develops and abstract thinking occurs. Reality can be subordinated to possibility. While it would be inappropriate to attempt to situate each subject in a Piagetian stage at the time of the interview, it is nonetheless worthy of note that the challenge of answering some of the questions is possibly compounded by the developmental factor.

A further caution should keep the educator from assuming that what children are expressing in the interviews is the extent of their understanding. Children's verbal expression may provide only a limited glimpse into what they understand, since language is only one way of expressing thinking. In the Piagetian formal operational stage in particular, thinking occurs beyond the linear limitations imposed by language (Furth, 1970; Labinowicz, 1980). In other words, the results of this study are but a window into the thinking of these children at a particular time, and in no way can claims be made that this study displays the full complexities of the children's conceptions of drama. Nor is it the aim of phenomenography as a research methodology to plumb the depths of an individual's understanding. Rather, this study seeks to find the structure of the diversity in the possible ways of conceptualizing drama in the given context.

While it may be said that a further limitation to this proposed study is that it involves only one group of children at two elementary grade levels, this is in fact the very nature of the research methodology chosen. Phenomenographical investigation is content and context specific, focussing on the variation of thinking and interpretation within a given situation.

This study is not without bias. The children were well aware of the professional and personal relationship between their teacher and myself. Therefore, they were also aware of my beliefs, stated or implied, regarding drama in education and may have been influenced from expressing views that were less than positive in nature.

## ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT DRAMA

The following is a brief list of my assumptions about drama in education and is presented here to clarify the personal backdrop to the study.

1. Drama is a welcome change of pace in the classroom.

2. Drama provides children an opportunity to explore points of view in a personal way. This kind of exploration is especially suited to studies in the Language Arts arena and in Social Studies.

3. Drama is a rigorous activity that challenges children in intellectual ways while engaging the emotions.

4. Drama is very close to play and is natural for children. Given a safe environment which is conducive to risk-taking, children of all ages can explore and problem solve.

5. Drama is an art form and provides children an opportunity for concrete expression and artistic problem solving.

## ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT LEARNING

Learning is central to drama and central to this study. Since the beliefs of a researcher will influence the investigation, my beliefs about learning are listed below.

1. Learning occurs constantly and is an on-going process.

2. Learning always involves a change of some kind.

3. Learning requires the active participation or engagement of the learner.

4. Learning is both individual and social.

5. People construct their own meaning which has logic.

6. People learn in different ways and at different rates.

7. Learning involves the affective domain and can be accompanied by a wide range of emotions.

## DESCRIPTIONS OF TERMS

For the purposes of this study the following terms in the fields of drama in education and phenomenography are used as defined below.

## Drama

Drama is a social art. It is social in that it involves the interaction of people in a specific encounter encompassing time, race, behaviors and emotions. It is a "way of creating and interpreting human meanings through imagined action and language that simulates and corresponds to real-life actions and language" (Neelands, 1984, p. 6). It allows a group to share a process where individuals can experiment with attitudes, values, roles and action. It is an art form in that it is concerned with the basic elements of theatre: language, space, time, deception, symbol and constraint (Bolton, 1990). Drama is metaphoric and allows for interpretation by participants and spectators. "Its meaning lies not in the actual context nor in the fictitious one, but in the dialectic set up between the two" (Bolton, 1979, p. 128). Drama is a way of learning and when used in education includes exercises, dramatic playing, theatre and a combination of all three which Bolton (1979) calls "Type D" drama.

## Drama in Education

A myriad of terms has sprung up in education to delineate Bolton's Type D drama from traditional theatre, from games and from dramatic exercises. Terms such as drama in education, drama as education, educational drama, drama for understanding, dramatic process, contextual drama, role drama, role play, and drama structure all refer to the general procedure of using a range of drama activities within an educational context for active learning and exploration. It is a mode of learning through which students can identify with imagined roles and situations, thereby learning to explore actively a range of issues, events and relationships (O'Neill & Lambert, 1982). Sources for a drama arise from curricular contents, most frequently from literary or historical sources and most often integrating a variety of skills and subject areas. The chief concern of the exploration is not with the development of the characters or the story, but with the active engagement of thoughts and feelings.

Of all the kinds of imaginative behaviours, ... drama is the only one that articulates inventing, anticipating, recollecting, hypothesizing, creating, musing and day-dreaming or any other mode of imagining through the medium of concrete action. In this lies the dramatic medium's potency as an educational tool. Teaching is a process concerned with breaking, challenging, supplementing or eroding a child's present achievement in conception and perception. The 'as if' behaviour can be the teacher's most effective tool for doing this. (Bolton, 1984, p. 142)

This exploration can vary in its duration. In the context of a classroom a drama can last anywhere from several days to several months. It involves the development of events with no predetermined outcome, the exploration of a story from a variety of perspectives in a non-linear fashion. The progression is determined by interactions between attitudes of the participants and the unfolding events. Frequently the drama moves towards a central issue which the students in role are challenged to address. Most often the teacher also assumes a role. Reflection on the process during and after the dramatizations is a crucial part of the learning process.

In short, drama in education is a powerful way of activating the imagination, examining different points of view and experimenting with language and ways of speaking that may not otherwise be available to learners.

## In Role or Role Taking

Role taking or being in role refers to adopting a stance or an attitude of a character, frequently one that has been created by the participant. It requires adopting an "as if" mental set (Davis & Lawrence, 1986, p. 19), and taking risks in a "no penalty area" (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984, p. 128). In other words, in creating a character and consciously adopting certain attitudes a participant is free to respond and react as long as there is believability and congruence in the character. This can provide opportunities for exploring different points of view and for promoting flexibility in thinking since "the individual is forced to break out of familiar patterns of thinking and consider what it's like to be some role which may represent a position different from -- or even opposed to -- what one ordinarily believes" (Nixon, 1987, p. 8). In classrooms this act of "walking in someone

else's shoes" can be supported through visualization, teacher narration, writing and art activities.

**Teacher in Role**

In adopting a role, a teacher can work from within a drama. This is said to be the most effective strategy of drama in education (Morgan & Saxton, 1987; Wagner, 1979). While continuing to monitor the work through direct involvement, the teacher is also involved in authentic interactions with the students and can be a part of the organic development of the drama. The traditional hierarchical relationship between the teacher and students can be shifted and power can be released to the students. Chizik (1985) identifies seven opportunities for the teacher that can be provided through this strategy:

1. To create drama experiences for the class as a whole group.
2. To provide a model for the student's use of role.
3. To enable participants to be taken into very precise situations.
4. To support, extend, and if necessary, elaborate on student responses.
5. To use theatre form to help 'frame' aspects of context.
6. To encourage student interaction and student decision-making.
7. To create reflective participation. (pp. 11-12)

Wagner (1979) identifies nine teaching registers, or attitudes which Heathcote uses when working in role. These are similar to stances and roles identified by Morgan and Saxton (1987). One of the most commonly used roles is the "second in command" (p. 42) where the teacher still has some authority and control although the locus of power exists outside in an imagined world. For example, the teacher might adopt the role of a messenger to a king or a higher power. The sole responsibility of the messenger is to deliver the message, thus the teacher-in-role has the right to ask many clarifying questions while offering little or no direction to the decision.

**Mantle of the Expert**

Mantle of the Expert is a dramatic technique where the students with the teacher's consent, take a role within the drama which is endowed with expertise. Their knowledge or skills may be something which the teacher in role desires or requires (Bolton, 1979). For

the students it means a commitment to the information and skills that accompany a given role and it means a willingness to work with a teacher in an unusual way. The teacher must accept any information given by the students within the drama that does not risk destroying the belief and commitment of the class. Incorrect facts for example, can be dealt with after the drama. In using this strategy, the relationships between the teacher and students are deliberately reversed. This experience can be empowering for students and can result in exploration which is free of some of the constraints of pre-determined roles. It can also present an opportunity for the teacher to assess students' knowledge and social skills. For all parties involved it affords an appreciation of a new way of being together. Two major kinds of learning are made possible by this strategy: students experience a sense of responsibility that accompanies certain roles and students gain respect for expertise and knowledge (Bolton 1979).

**Metaxis**

Metaxis is the ability to hold two worlds in mind at the same time in a liberated, conscious state of mind. It is the interplay between the actual world and the fictitious one. This permits participants to be involved and yet detached. It allows them to interact and to reflect on their actions at the same time. "The role-player is actually sitting there on a chair; the interviewee is not 'real', but we respond to her 'as if' she is" (Bolton, 1984, p. 141).

**Phenomenography**

Phenomenography is a research methodology that is concerned with the relationships that exist between a person and the world, focussing in particular on the perception itself. What is of interest is people's ideas and experiences about the world around them, how they understand the world to be. This is a shift in perspective from the detached, objective observations of rationalistic research paradigms. It is research that aims to systematize "forms of thought in terms of which people interpret significant aspects of reality"

(Marton, 1981, p. 177). The point of departure is relational: the interest is in the relation between the subject and a specified aspect of the world. What is of interest is not whether a thing can be described or not, nor what a thing is but how the subject experiences it. The researcher thus adopts an experiential or 'second order' perspective in which things are described from the point of view of the respondent and the researcher seeks to disclose the different ways in which respondents understand the world.

## Paradigm

A paradigm is a basic set of beliefs which represent what we think about the world. It is a set of assumptions that "serve as touchstones in guiding our lives" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 80). Thus dealings in the world are constantly referenced, most often unconsciously, to paradigms which are wrought as part of our socialization. They are the basis upon which people act and think and while making consistent action possible, can be constraining due to unquestioned assumptions.

## Conceptions

The notion of conception is central to phenomenography and therefore, to the description and analysis of this study. The definition is presented here in summary form and is further developed throughout Chapter 3.

A conception is "a way of seeing something, a qualitative relationship between an individual and some phenomenon" (Johansson, et al., 1985, p. 236). A conception is not obvious, but rather is underlying and assumed until it is surfaced through reflection. Stalker (1989) distinguishes this term from words such as views, attitudes, perceptions, evaluation and beliefs by likening conceptions to filters through which interpretation is made. "They are forms of thought or ways of understanding the world. ... (They) represent different ways in which people experience and understand phenomena in their worlds" (p. 41).

Conceptions are stable across time and characterize a person's thinking, as opposed to perceptions that refer to the process of the moment. Perceptions refer to the process of affecting the stimulus, while conceptions imply some permanence of the basis upon which the impacting is achieved. The difference between the two is temporal (Pratt, personal communication, 1990).

Two aspects of a conception can be described each having different dimensions and levels, but being intertwined so that neither can exist nor be understood without the other (Beaty, Dall'Alba & Marton, in press; Pratt, 1990; Stalker, 1989 ). Both aspects have an external and an internal horizon. These identify how the conception is separate from other conceptions (external horizon) and how it relates to its component parts (internal horizon) (Beaty et al, in press). The referential aspect of a conception refers to the global meaning or general aspect of the conception. The structural aspect of a conception refers to how the conception makes itself known.

**Second-Order Perspective**

A second-order perspective is concerned with the world of the respondents' experience and asks how it is being experienced. This is contrasted to a first-order perspective which concentrates on behaviors or items that can be observed and asks what the experience is and how it is. From the second-order perspective, the researcher's task is thus, to "look with them and to see the world as they see it" (Stalker, 1989, p. 39). Phenomenography is a research methodology which takes a second-order perspective.

**Data Pool**

In phenomenographical analysis quotations from the interviews illustrate certain categories of quotations. Their meaning is considered first within the context of the interview, then in relation to other, similar quotations. Once separate from the interview, these quotations, also known as units of meaning, or expressions, become a context of their

own. Attention is now shifted to the new context, regardless of where the quotations came from. This is called the data pool.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has introduced the research problem and the method of study. It has also presented my beliefs and assumptions which influenced the work of this investigation. The next two chapters review the literature relevant to the study and to the research perspective.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is a review of the literature related to the study and is divided into four major sections:

1. literature related to the child-centered nature of drama;

2. literature related to drama as viewed by children versus drama as viewed by teachers;

3. literature related to drama as a teaching method for teachers;

4. literature related to reflection in drama in education.

### CHILD CENTERED NATURE OF DRAMA

Play and dramatic activity are natural to young children and central in their development. Play theorists have stated the importance of play as a natural bridge from immediate thought to thought beyond that which is present in a child's perceptual field (Piaget, 1976; Vygotsky, 1976). Through play children develop linguistic fluency and awareness as they take on roles and assume speech styles to complement the roles (Garvey, 1977; Heath, 1983). This act of collaborative talk, both among the children and with the teacher, should be viewed not simply as rehearsal for written evidence of thinking, but as an essential part of literacy. Oral discourse occurs in many forms both inside and outside of the classroom, and it is the engagement, the purposefulness and the empowering nature, that mark the potential for learning within classroom settings (Chang & Wells, 1988; Wells, 1990). For collaborative talk to have empowering effects Chang and Wells (1988) identify two essential conditions which must be met:

1. the learner must have ownership of the task and the teacher strives to ensure that this is respected;

2. the teacher's contributions to the dialogue are contingently responsive to the needs of the learner, both as understood in the light of the immediate as well as in longer-term goals (Ibid, p. 97).

These conditions are as inherent to any effective drama lesson as are the children's responses to the unfolding of the lesson. It is the role of the teacher to respond in a way that offers children the potential of viewing situations differently and of moving into new areas of awareness and learning (Wells, 1986). Phenomenographers view this process similarly in that they see learning as being a qualitative change in a person's "seeing, experiencing, understanding, (and) conceptualizing some things in the real world" (Marton & Ramsden, 1988, p. 271).

Drama in education can provide an active steppingstone from direct experience to more abstract and generalized thinking and language use. It is comprised of verbal action and invites the child to react spontaneously to a given situation. In this it has been called "the matrix of all language arts" (Moffett, 1968, p. 61). Its purpose is to create meaning through the melding of thinking and acting, frequently offering opportunities for reexamining ideas and experimenting with them by giving them form (Bolton, 1979; Booth, 1985). In educational settings, older children have traditionally been involved with dramatic activities such as invention and enactment as part of the language arts (Moffett & Wagner, 1976). Being in role is potentially a reminder of the free exploration of child's play. Most children welcome this opportunity. Their definition of drama at the onset may mean creating skits and plays for an audience of other children or adults. For both younger and middle-aged children drama appeals to their natural tendencies to play and to enact.

One of the major features of child-centered learning which is characteristic of drama in education is that children's existing language, knowledge and interests are used. Educational writers such as Donaldson (1978), Vygotsky (1962), and Wells (1986) recognize that children perform a very important role in the process of making their own

meaning. Children are no longer seen as empty receptacles for knowledgeable teachers to fill, nor is it accepted that there exists a unique, rational world separate from the child which must be grasped (Bruner, 1986). Instead rich, engaging contexts are provided and children are actively involved in making sense of their world and constructing understandings through interactions between their mental structures and their surroundings. These contexts in drama, for example, consist of structures that are organized by the teacher together with the children, or with the knowledge of the children's views in mind. The teacher's role is one of facilitator. A typical drama may thus begin with a teacher eliciting past experiences with drama and/or with a topic of interest and gradually lead to direction setting for new study. It is the teacher's structuring and intervention that constantly brings new awareness to children's existing knowledge (Neelands, 1984). This intervention may be from within a role which a teacher assumes. Whether in or out of role, the teacher's educational purpose is to support the individual children in their movements towards new understandings by maintaining a stance of genuine curiosity. This requires an attitude of genuine interest in the world of children as well as the skillful use of questions and responses which are instrumental in bringing out children's prior knowledge. Questions for which the teacher does not know the answer are a drama teacher's most valuable tool (O'Neill & Lambert, 1982; Wagner, 1979) and can encourage children to "draw conclusions and appreciate consequences as they evaluate issues from the perspective of both the fictitious context and the wider context of broad human experience" (Chizik, 1985, p. 101).

Drama in the educational context is child-centered since it is much more interested in the process of children's meaning making than in an end product. Historically the movement away from finished products to be presented for an audience began with Finlay-Johnson during the first decade of this century (Bolton, 1984). She valued children's natural instincts and allowed them to structure their own work. This innovation of moving

away from preparing for performance was notable and foreshadowed many of the premises upon which work in drama is done today. It was not, however, until some 50 years later that these concepts were fully developed by educators such as Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton. In the interim, a tendency to focus on speech switched the attention from content to skill. Teachers became interested in play productions, focussing on speech and drama as a way of training children to act. This was followed by a movement in Great Britain frequently referred to as Developmental Drama which believed in personal expression. Through exercises and sensory games it encouraged individuality and life skills. This methodology, developed by Brian Way, encompassed children's theatre, classroom drama and the integrated arts with much of the work focussing on games, relaxation and sensitivity exercises (Bolton, 1984). At the same time Winifred Ward (Ward, 1957) in the United States was encouraging a development of the imagination through the arts. She encouraged integration of drama activities into the regular classroom and developed a method of play making using improvisation and pantomime, basing the work on literature.

The 1960s gave way to a greater concern for developing an understanding and appreciation of the art form through the child's active engagement in the drama process. It was Dorothy Heathcote who paved the way for the use of drama which is of interest in this study and which is now accepted methodology for many educators. Drama can be placed squarely in the center of the curriculum where the importance of content is recognized and children are challenged to engage affectively as well as intellectually (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984; Wagner, 1979). Educators are encouraged to see drama as a powerful mechanism, a way into learning which can encompass many concepts and skills. It is a

> ...precise teaching instrument, which works best when it is part of the learning process. Drama is no longer considered simply as another branch of art education, but as a unique teaching tool, vital for language development and invaluable as a method in the exploration of other subject areas. ( Johnson & O'Neill, 1984, p. 42)

The underlying assumption is that the learner is valued in his process of meaning making. Drama is more concerned with the child's experience and how understanding is personalized than with performance (Bolton, 1984; Wagner, 1979). It is concerned with drawing from the children's own experiences and inviting their input throughout the process. In short, it is a way of working from "the inside out" (Wagner, 1979).

Personalization of learning can occur within the group experience. Drama is a social activity which concentrates on groups rather than on individuals and focusses on aspects outside of the self (Bolton, 1984; Heathcote & Herbert, 1985; O'Neill, 1985). It is concerned with the interaction of people. Drama recognizes that children are social beings and need direct experiences so that learning can occur actively. Children need to be directly involved in shaping and making connections to their own world. Groups can be structured to suit the problems of a particular issue or concept to be explored. They can assume identities with aspects of power, needs and purposes. In using a dramatic technique such as "mantle of the expert" (Wagner, 1979; Heathcote & Herbert, 1985) for example, the social aspect is structured so that participants are endowed with power and knowledge beyond their present circumstances. This then allows children "to work in groups, to create, direct, make decisions, evaluate and to respond within (a) functional, meaningful and relevant context" (Nelson, 1988, p 21). Children are able to view situations from a particular vantage point and, through reflection, individually and collectively, can be guided to expand their own thinking (Verriour, 1984).

When children are actively engaged in a learning process approach, they will be emotionally involved. Drama is child-centered in that it involves the whole child and acknowledges the role of the emotions in fueling cognitive development (Bolton, 1979; Davis & Lawrence, 1986; Neelands, 1984). Drama invites children to respond authentically, to identify with characters in a deep way and to be curious about their own humanity (Wagner, 1979). One way of structuring this is to find a response area where both universal and

personal feelings can be surfaced (Davis & Lawrence, 1986; Wagner, 1979). Children

identify with broad implications of situations and feel significance of actions in the real

world within the safe confines of the drama structure. Heathcote (Wagner, 1979, p. 77)

isolates six ways in which deeper involvement with the universal realm is encouraged:

1.   stopping the drama to reflect;

2.   slowing the place within the drama;

3.   imposing rituals;

4.   `classifying responses of the class and giving them back to the class in categories

that reveal their implications;

5.   interjecting probes and presses;

6. using symbols.

Besides the engagement with the universal as a way of increasing emotional depth,

Bolton (in Davis & Lawrence, 1986) identifies tapping the existing network of

relationships and attitudes among a group of children as a strong resource of emotional

energy. Sometimes this takes the simple form of recognizing competitive elements in the

group or being aware of individuals who are accepted as leaders. By transforming these

influences in a way that is challenging while useful to the drama, potentially interfering

energy can be harnessed.

A final characteristic which makes drama child-centered is that drama has a strong

relationship to narrative. It has been said that narrative is "the primary act of mind"

(Hardy, 1977), that human beings make sense of their experiences through a fundamental

process of storying (Egan, 1979; Rosen, 1986). While drama is not necessarily

determined by plot and action, for children the initial magnetism is often the unfolding of

events coupled with the ongoing elements of surprise and tension. In both drama and

narrative the contexts are fictional while the responses are real (Booth, 1985). Both are a

type of communication that give form to thought and feeling. While narrative may evoke

response, drama provides an arena for extending the response and making it concrete. "Whereas narrative summarizes drama, drama elaborates narrative" (Moffett, 1968, p. 62). Through external representation, children are invited to make their thinking visible. They can exchange identities, assume postures and attitudes while exploring feelings and attitudes to create their own meanings (Booth, 1985).

## DRAMA AS VIEWED BY CHILDREN AND DRAMA AS VIEWED BY TEACHERS

Children in the middle years of schooling, although more self-conscious of their actions and more influenced by the opinions of peers than their younger counterparts, enjoy dramatic activity. Left to their own devices, roles which they assume and performances which they create may tend to have repetitious plots and characters which borrow heavily from television and well-known stories. Their motives and initial goals may be very different from those of their teacher. Gillham (cited in Bolton, 1979, p. 51 and in Morgan & Saxton 1987, p. 164) distinguishes between the 'play for the teacher' and the 'play for the children'. Frequently two parallel sets of goals co-exist. The children may, for example, be anxious about the unfolding of a chronological development of the story line and have a desire to perform for audiences. The teacher, on the other hand, may see possibilities for learning to occur in ways which are unfamiliar to the children such as changing perspective which may require working in different imaginary time frames, different contexts and assuming the roles of a range of characters. Chronological evolvement may not match the exploratory possibilities, nor may the purpose appear to be enhanced by working towards a theatrical presentation. Nonetheless, while teachers' responsibilities lie in reaching towards goals beyond and above the children's wishes, they will need to be cognizant of their students' needs, will respect their views and take them into account throughout the work (Bolton, 1979).

## DRAMA AS A TEACHING METHOD

Writings by educators and theorists have explained methodologies of using drama in the classroom and have laid claim to its power as a teaching tool. In a review of educators and documents from two Ministries of Education, major claims regarding the efficacy of drama in education have come to light. Five educators in the field of drama were chosen for this perusal: Dorothy Heathcote (in Johnson and O'Neill, 1984; Wagner, 1979), Gavin Bolton, (1984; in Davis & Lawrence, 1986), Cecily O'Neill, (1976, O'Neill & Lambert, 1982), Jonothan Neelands, (1984) and Patrick Verriour, (1983, 1984, 1985a, 1985b). Curriculum documents from Ministries of Education in Ontario, 1984 and British Columbia, 1985 were also considered. Following is a list of the major claims.

1. Drama is a social art which can act as a mirror of society and, as such can help children become aware of human behavior, modes of communication, and interaction (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984; Province of Ontario, 1984).

2. Drama can help children understand themselves (O'Neill et al, 1976).

3. Drama helps children deal with universal issues, relationships and events beyond the facts (Davis & Lawrence, 1986; O'Neill & Lambert, 1982; O'Neill, 1989a; Wagner, 1979).

4. Drama engages the affective zone as well as the intellect (Davis & Lawrence, 1986; Johnson & O'Neill, 1984; Neelands, 1984).

5. Drama activates the imagination and allows children to explore possibilities beyond the immediate (Davis & Lawrence, 1986; Province of British Columbia, 1985).

6. Drama creates opportunities for children to personalize knowledge and make meaning, encouraging children to connect past knowledge with new understandings (Bolton, 1984; Davis & Lawrence,1986; Neelands, 1984; O'Neill & Lambert, 1982; Wagner, 1979).

7. Drama engages the intellect, articulating and promoting a wide variety of thinking skills (Bolton, 1984; Neelands, 1984; O'Neill, et al, 1976; O'Neill & Lambert, 1982; Province of British Columbia, 1985).

8. Drama provides children opportunities for reflecting on their and others' actions as well as on the uses of language (Verriour, 1984; Wagner,1979).

9. Drama involves children in metaxis, allowing them to operate in two modes at the same time: the fictitious and the actual (Bolton, 1984; Davis & Lawrence,1986).

10. Drama assists children in learning skills, facts, concepts and language (Davis & Lawrence, 1986; O'Neill & Lambert, 1976; Verriour, 1985a, 1985b).

11. Through drama children can experience learning as being holistic and integrated (O'Neill & Lambert, 1976).

12. Attitudinal shifts and changes in understanding of the world can occur through the negotiation of meanings (Bolton, 1984; Davis & Lawrence,1986; Johnson & O'Neill, 1984; Neelands, 1984).

13. In exercising the intellect, drama develops common knowledge or "understanding which is apart from or supersedes the 'bodies of knowledge' of the disciplines, but is itself rigorously disciplined in a unique subjective/objective relationship with the world" (Bolton, 1984, p. 150).

While the theorists have claimed its power as a teaching medium, the place of drama within provincial curricular contexts has traditionally been as part of the language arts (Province of British Columbia, 1978, 1981). In British Columbia ministerial support for a wider view of drama began with the publication of the Elementary Fine Arts Curriculum Guide/Resource Book in 1985. Drama was clearly defined as a fine art and as a learning medium. It was distinguished from theatre and was defined as a "developmental process centered on the learner...(involving) spontaneous dramatic play of young children, and the games, characterizations, and dramatizations arising from children's imagination and

experiences" (Province of British Columbia, 1985, p. 85). Subsequent documents such as the Social Studies Resource Guide (Province of British Columbia, 1986a), the Enhancing and Evaluating Oral Communication in the Intermediate Grades (Province of British Columbia, 1988), the Primary Program (Province of British Columbia 1990c) and The Intermediate Program (Province of British Columbia, 1990b) all provide support for teachers using drama in ways beyond theatrical presentations or simulation games. Whether the guidelines and suggestions from these documents have been implemented in a wide variety of classrooms may be doubtful. It is clear however, that much more support is needed for the regular classroom teacher before drama becomes fully implemented in the classroom. This study will add credence not only to children's view of their involvement in drama, but also to the field of drama in education in general.

## REFLECTION IN DRAMA IN EDUCATION

Reflective and metacognitive thought in all learning areas is recognized as a life skill. Futurists are emphasizing the importance of providing for children numerous and varied opportunities for developing a commitment to life long learning and are envisioning that the ability to think in new ways will constitute educational basics for the next century (Benjamin, 1989; Crowell, 1989; McLaren, 1989). Reflecting orally on one's actions, for example, is a feature of literate thinking since the very act of testing out one's ideas may call for a reshaping and a movement into new realizations (Chang & Wells, 1988). Learning is a reconstructing of knowledge, a meshing of prior and new information as opposed to a unidirectional transmission of facts. Learning throughout this investigation is viewed as highly interactional in nature. It is a process which calls for the negotiation of meaning as learners move towards making shifts in ways of viewing the world (Ramsden, 1988; Verriour, 1985b; Wells, 1986 ). Part of this negotiation is a distancing process which involves reflecting on the direct experience.

Reflection is a major part of drama. In fact, Heathcote suggests it is the crux of the dramatic process (Wagner, 1979). While drama allows for the exploration of concepts, ideas and events in concrete and abstract ways, its main function is to create meaning and to deepen the learning experience (Bolton, 1979; Boyd, 1988). It promotes creative thought, self-reflection and flexibility by requiring students to assume different points of view (Blatner, 1989). Heathcote has said, "Without the development of the power of reflection we have very little. It is reflection that permits the storing of knowledge, the recalling of power of feeling and memory of past feelings" (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984, p. 94).

Reflection upon a dramatic experience can have several effects.

1. It can elicit trust. (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984)

2. Children can be challenged to look beyond direct experience to more universal implications. Their learning is extended and enhanced (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984; Verriour, 1985a, 1985b). Reflection does not necessarily occur naturally. Participants in the drama are sometimes too immersed in the activities to be consciously aware of the possible links that might be made with their past learning. It is the teacher then, who carries the responsibility to deepen the level of meaning within the action and to explore with the students possible implications and generalizations. Heathcote calls this "dropping to the universal" (Wagner, 1979, p. 76).

3. During reflection children can make connections and learn to take responsibility (Felton & Stoessiger, 1987; Woodey, 1988). Without reflection, feelings may be intensely experienced and remembered only as such. It is through reflection that the insights and understandings which can influence change in behavior and attitudes are reached. This bridging from the context of the drama to the 'real world' is the function and the power of reflection; it is "the distilling of experience to its essence" (Wagner, 1979, p. 96).

4. Reflection "permits the storing of knowledge, the recalling of power of feeling, and memory of past feelings" (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984, p. 97).

Bolton (1979) identifies three kinds of reflection.

1. Personal reflection leads to a change in self-awareness and allows personal insight into the self or into a situation. This may for example, be evident in a child's thinking about a certain issue or in attitudes towards people as evidenced by a study done on gender role bias (Boyd, 1988).

2. Universal reflection leads to a higher level of abstraction and may be evidenced in the manner in which children are able to generalize about reactions or feelings.

3. Analogous reflection leads to understanding that the generalized principles can be taken from the drama context and related to other contexts.

By being cognizant of these levels and by selecting contexts that might fuel the understanding of certain concepts, other possibilities for understanding and for exploration of problems become clear (Verriour, 1984).

Reflection happens either as part of the drama or as a discussion following the drama. However, in its most powerful form it occurs throughout the drama when individual and group insight is articulated as part of the context (Bolton, 1979; O'Neill & Lambert, 1982; Woodey, 1988). The teacher, being true to the drama in choosing the time and convention for reflection may, for example, choose to freeze time and have children in performance mode verbalize feelings, reactions, or views at that moment. Pausing the action or slowing it down also serves to build belief and focus thinking (Verriour, 1984, 1985). Nixon (1987) distinguishes between three kinds of oral language used in the drama process: deciding and preparing, exploring and shaping, reflecting and appraising. It is the latter, he says, that is "an element which runs through the entire drama process from inception to conclusion" (p. 15) and is a task for students and teachers to explore together.

Frequently the teacher takes a role and there is no external audience. However, even though there may be no one else in the room, participants have a strong sense of observing themselves and being audience to themselves and to their own actions (Robinson, 1980,

Verriour, 1983, O'Neill, 1989b). The engagement takes places through an act of the imagination which Boal calls "metaxis," the ability to hold both the real and imaginary world in mind at the same time (quoted in Bolton, 1984, p. 141). This is an intentional state of consciousness brought on by the participation in the drama and allows for experiencing and reflecting almost simultaneously.

At other times, a stepping out of the drama completely may allow children to "reflect on the implications of their actions as well as to consider alternative decisions they might have made within the context of the drama" (Verriour, 1983, p. 731). Understandings of what has been learned as well as of the process can be formed. Individual as well as group decisions can be made regarding further developments (Felton & Stoessiger, 1987). This kind of metacognitive activity is also useful as a form of self-evaluation and information for both children and teachers in all curricular areas (Province of British Columbia, 1988, 1990b, 1990c). Whatever conventions are used they must be seen as a natural part of the process so that the children do not feel manipulated into something that is forced and foreign and has the possibility of interfering with the trust and the truthful nature of the drama (Verriour, 1984).

Activities that can frame reflection are numerous. Wagner (1979) identifies six distinct strategies used by Heathcote: (a) stopping for reflection, (b) slowing down a drama, (c) using ritual, (d) summarizing responses given by a group, (e) using comments or questions to press and probe, and (f) using symbols. O'Neill (1982) identifies the strategy of introducing an outsider role to engage the students in discussing the action reflectively. Changing perspective by moving the the focus backwards or forwards in time can also be effective in promoting reflection. Morgan and Saxton (1987) list a variety of strategies involving any combination of the language skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing with participants being in or out of role. Not all strategies necessarily need to

involve language, oral or written. Expressive modes such as visual art or physical depiction are also used.

Inherent in all the strategies for framing reflection is effective questioning on the part of the teacher regardless of whether this is done in or out of role. Chizik (1985) in her study of teacher questions and questioning techniques, found questions to be valuable in encouraging students to "...draw conclusions and appreciate consequences as they evaluate issues from the perspective of both the fictitious context and the wider context of broad human experience" (p. 101).

Fleming (1982) distinguishes between three major ways in which reflective awareness of language can be fostered in a drama: (a) during the ongoing process of the drama where the child may choose a part and be drawn in to bring in past experience to create an imaginary situation and knowingly using the appropriate language for the role, (b) in a specific role chosen by the teacher for the purpose of reflection (for example a reporting role) within the drama and (c) after the drama when children as spectators discuss the experience in which they have been participants. Byron (1986) extends the last distinction by saying that in drama

> ...we examine actions, attitudes, values and relationships from a dual viewpoint: from the viewpoint of those involved - we 'become' or 'represent' the people in the drama - and also from our own viewpoint - as people making, and reflecting on, the drama. So we examine them both 'hot' and 'cold': as participant and spectator. (p. 22)

While a variety of ways exist for examining reflection, it is through the spectator point of view that this research investigates children's understandings of drama. Although the literature offers reasons for the purposes and the power of reflection with children, it does not provide a detailed analysis of the results of such reflection. In this study children are asked to reflect on the nature of the dramatic process with references to specific dramatic contexts.

**SUMMARY**

In summary, if drama in education is accepted as being child-centered, then children's views of the process should be of primary interest. The purpose of this study is to provide opportunity for the voice of children to be heard on their process. It is their thinking and their reflections which are the center of the study. The wide range of claims by educators and theorists collectively presents a view that drama in education is a powerful way of working with children. While the support of these writings continues to be essential in the movement towards acceptance of drama in the educational mainstream, research based on the views of children is needed to present the insiders' perspective on the process. By offering a study of children's reflections, teachers will have access to children's views of the process and experience an affirmation of the power of reflection.

## 3. RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

In selecting an approach for the research it was my intention to match the paradigm whose assumptions best fit the phenomenon to be studied and the philosophic assumptions behind this study. In this chapter the research paradigm as well as the methodology are explored. The naturalistic paradigm stands in contrast to the traditional rationalistic paradigm. In comparing the two belief systems, Guba (1981) identifies three key underlying assumptions which serve to differentiate the rationalistic from the naturalistic.

The first concerns the nature of reality. In contrast to a rationalistic view of a single reality upon which inquiry can converge and which can be fragmented into smaller parts independent of the context, the naturalistic paradigm

> ...rests on the assumption that there are multiple realities, that inquiry will diverge rather than converge as more and more is known, and that all 'parts' of reality are interrelated so that the study of any one part necessarily influences all other parts. (p. 77)

These realities are seen to unfold as interactions between respondents and investigators take place. Theory and understanding are generated rather than tested or verified. Naturalistic inquiry relies on qualitative research methods which inquire into the nature of experience and construction of reality. There is a direct exploration of the respondents' experiences, in this case the experience of the children involved in the specific context, drama in education.

A second assumption is concerned with the nature of the inquirer and object of inquiry. A rationalistic view sees them as being quite separate whereas the naturalistic sees them as being interrelated and effecting one another.

The third assumption is in relation to truth statements. Whereas a rationalistic view contends that enduring statements can be made outside of the context, in the naturalistic paradigm the results of the study are context-related and rests

... on the assumption that generalizations are not possible, that at best what one can hope for are working hypotheses that relate to a particular context. (Guba, 1981, p. 77)

Any hypothesis generated would rest on a wide base of description of the particular context. The central purpose of the naturalistic paradigm, also known as the qualitative-phenomenological research paradigm, is therefore, to describe learning in a natural setting from the learner's perspective (Taylor & Morgan, 1986). This corresponds with the purposes of this study and the research approach taken.

## PHENOMENOGRAPHY

Phenomenography is a relatively new form of research emerging from qualitative roots and is viewed by some as a novel, alternative approach to more traditional methods (Fetterman, 1988). It was developed in the 1970s by a group of researchers headed by Ference Marton at the University of Gotheburg in Sweden and has many similarities with the philosophical school of phenomenology. While the two terms are also similar and may easily be confused by the lay-person, there are major differences between the two. Following is a description of some of the unique features of phenomenography as compared and contrasted to phenomenology.

Phenomenography aims at learning about people's experiences of the world, how they interpret it, understand and conceptualize it. It starts from the assumption that there can be a separation between the experienced and the experience. Phenomenographers are interested in the latter (Stalker, 1989). In this study, for instance, the interest is in the children's interpretations of the dramatic experience, not the essence of the dramatic experience as a whole. The rationale behind this kind of research is that, while behaviors are traditionally of interest and are studied, underlying understandings are often taken for granted. Therefore the data is collected in a manner which allows subjects to consider past experiences in a reflective manner. Phenomenography is therefore based on common sense

understandings and logic, not on pre-reflective understandings, as is phenomenology (Ibid). The objective is to describe how the participant is seeing the world.

This leads to a second characteristic of phenomenography: the very fundamental notion of second-order perspective (Gibbs, Morgan, & Taylor 1982; Marton, 1981, 1986; Saljo, 1988). Phenomenology in its first-order perspective concentrates on the essence of experience and on observable behaviors. The second-order perspective, on the other hand, attempts to describe different ways in which the world is being seen through the eyes of respondents (Saljo, 1988; Stalker, 1989). It seeks to find out how the world looks from the point of view of the participants. It is not interested in quantity or in the process of perception, nor is it concerned with how the researcher observes or interprets the experience. The phenomenographer is attempting to look "with" the respondents to see the world. In this process phenomenographers do not pretend to separate conceptual thought from the experience, but aim simply to describe the relationship between the subject and the experience (Wilson, 1991). Phenomenography thus becomes an empirical phenomenology, a third person enterprise dealing with perceived reality. For example, a first-order perspective on the present study might be to pursue the question "What is it about drama that children enjoy?" which would yield different answers than a second-order question "What do children think about what they enjoy about drama?"

A third distinguishing characteristic is that while phenomenology aims to find essence by identifying commonalities in a phenomenon, the interest in phenomenography is to find variation within the experience (Marton, 1984, 1986). It is interested in the unique. The outcome of this study, for example, will be a set of descriptions of the different ways in which children experience dramatic events in the classroom. Since it is the variations that are of interest, not the similarities, the number of times an item occurs is of no importance. In fact, a single expression of something which is unique is seen as equally important to a series of similar expressions (Pratt, personal communication, 1991).

The fourth characteristic of phenomenography is that it maps out its findings in the form of conceptions. These are the researcher's attempts to interpret the individuals' views of the world. Conceptions are not qualities of individuals but are better considered as categories of descriptions which are used in facilitating the understanding of concrete cases of human functioning (Marton, 1981; Stalker, 1989). They are the significantly different ways that emerge from the research as individuals explain their experience. Phenomenographers contend that people act on how they interpret the world rather than on objective information. These underlying and invisible conceptions form the basis for reasoning and action (Marton, 1981; Stalker, 1989). As seen from the second-order perspective, the reasonings that arise from them are logical and are comprehensible. The researcher's role is to discover, to describe and to bring to light these person/world relationships that are often taken for granted (Wilson, 1991). Furthermore, it is not only possible but highly likely that individuals would hold several conceptions or parts of conceptions at any given time and even different conceptions under different circumstances. These conceptions could in fact be contradictory or complementary and can change given a different set of circumstances or new information (Marton, 1981, 1984; Saljo, 1988). These understandings which phenomenography sets out to reveal are not static entities which individuals possess, but rather, individuals are seen to behave in accordance to them. They are thus, underlying ways of understanding the world which act as filters through which life is interpreted (Stalker, 1989).

Each conception can furthermore be viewed in two different ways: by looking at the referential and the structural aspects. The referential deals with the more global aspect of a concept, whereas the structural deals with how the conception makes itself known. Generally the referential aspect answers the question "what?", while the structural aspect answers the question "how?" For example, a child might hold the conception that drama is cooperative activity. The global aspect of this conception would be the group work, while the

structural aspect would be talking in groups, solving problems and presenting something to the rest of the class. These aspects are obviously interrelated even though for the purposes of research and description they are separated.

In presenting the findings of their studies, phenomenographers have repeatedly found that phenomena are experienced in a relatively limited number of ways (Marton, 1981, 1986; Marton & Saljo, 1984; Renstrom, Andersson, & Marton, 1988). In the complex process of analysis a stabilization is ultimately reached and a group of conceptions, generally under 10 in number, is arrived at. For the phenomenographer, the presentation of conceptions is not merely a process of listing them or describing their internal structures; interest lies in a further step of interpreting and mapping the relationship between them. Since the conceptions are not seen as characteristics of individuals, but as ways of functioning, the relationship between the conceptions invites us to think in terms of "an abstract system of description, a gigantic space of categories, in which individuals move - more or less freely - back and forth" (Marton, 1984, p. 62). This ordering is called the outcome space and can be useful in seeing the larger picture of the phenomenon in question, a type of map of the landscape.

In summary, phenomenography is a relational, experiential approach which, like phenomenology, is interested in how people experience the world. Unlike phenomenology, it adopts a second-order perspective in its aim to describe the respondents' point of view. In this it seeks variation and presents its findings in the form of conceptions.


## PERTINENT STUDIES

Studies in phenomenography span age ranges from pre-school to post-secondary and beyond, addressing a range of questions in the area of teaching and learning (Marton, Hounsell & Entwistle, 1984 and Ramsden, 1988). Of particular interest to this study is an investigation by Pramling (1988) which addresses the question of children's awareness of

their own learning. Involving three groups of pre-school children, Pramling's findings indicate that when content is taught metacognitively children's awareness of their own learning increases. Thus awareness of the learning process is shown to be heightened when thoughtful reflection is built into the teaching process.

Interviewing children and observing them has become a norm in a variety of curricular areas such as in the sciences and in language learning, particularly in the area of teaching and learning of writing. The curiosity of children's interpretations of scientific understanding has led to the concept of children's science and the development of an interview method called the "Interview-about-Instances" (Gilbert, Watts, & Osborne, 1985; Osborne & Freyberg, 1985 ). Open-ended questions accompanied by non-evaluative, supplemental questions form the basis of such interviews. Interviews are later transcribed and analyzed in a process similar to that of phenomenography.

The recognition that children are logical, resourceful beings is central also to the research studies and writings that have appeared in the last two decades in the area of the language arts (Atwell, 1987, 1990; Calkins, 1983; Donaldson, 1978; Graves, 1983; Jagger & Smith-Burke, 1985). For example Moore (1982) reviews studies which focus on the verbalized knowledge of children regarding various aspects of reading. Studies employ interview strategies, some in addition to structured reading situations. Findings show that children gradually develop knowledge of what words are and the relationship between written and spoken words. Also revealed are perceptions by younger children that reading has more to do with "orthographic verbal translation perspective rather than extraction of overall meaning" (Moore, 1982, p. 127).

At the heart of all of these investigations including this study is the recognition and the trust that children know a great deal before they enter school and that the communicative interactions with adults play a significant role in their development. "Kidwatching" according to Goodman (1985) is becoming a recognizable part of the teacher's repertoire of

skills. Perhaps "kidasking" is equally gaining status as it becomes a more common form of data collection in educational research.

## RELATIONAL VIEW OF LEARNING

Phenomenography is seen as particularly relevant to the present study in that it was developed in response to educational questions within the educational framework (Marton, 1986). Specifically in the area of research on learning, justification is based on an understanding of learning as being a process of shifting in one's understanding. It is seen as making

> ...a qualitative change in a person's conception of a certain phenomenon or of a certain aspect of reality, it is a distinct change in how that phenomenon is perceived, how it is understood, and what meaning it carried for the learner. (Johansson, et al., 1985, p. 235)

This view of learning is complementary to my views of learning as presented in Chapter 1 and to the purpose of the study. Learning is seen to be a shifting from one conception to another and teaching is seen as the activity of understanding learning and encouraging change. This relational view of learning is further explained by Ramsden (1988) as having five key features.

1. Learning is about changes in conceptions. It is a process which involves a shift in the way people perceive reality and involves a change in the quality of the experience for the learner. A dramatic experience situated in an historical context, for example, could provide opportunities for children to experience aspects of culture or the points of view of people with whom they have no first hand experience. Through the selection of universal concepts for the dramatic exploration children would able to relate to situations which are distant from them and understanding of the historical or the fictional could be shifted (Davis & Lawrence, 1986; Wagner, 1979).

2. Learning always has a content as well as process. The power of drama in education is that it is not an artistic creation outside of, or separate from other subject areas. At best the content takes place in a context which links with students' personal lives as well as with subject area learnings. Through reflection upon the process students make significant connections to other areas of learning as well as to their lives. This links directly to the third feature of learning.

3. Improving learning is about relations between learners and subject matter, not teaching methods and student characteristics. This means that for educators there is an interest in the experience of the learner in relation to what teachers do as well as what they are required to learn. In drama, one of the key components is reflection which provides learners and teachers opportunities to personalize new learning and connect new insights to existing knowledge.

4. Improving learning is dependent upon understanding the student's perspective. This can only be accomplished by providing opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and for educators to seriously consider these views. It is hoped that this study by its very nature will make a contribution both to the area of drama in education and to the wider area of children's learning process.

5. Educational research and teaching are closely related. Many of the diagnostic processes which teachers use to assess the progress of children in a class are similar to the phases which phenomenographers undertake in order to isolate conceptions of phenomena. This study, arose from experiences in my classroom and in as much as it pursues a question that arose directly from that experience, it is an inquiry which is bringing together theory and practice.

**PROCEDURE FOR ANALYSIS**

Analysis in phenomenography is fueled by the aim of the study and follows two major

phases. The first phase requires selection of parts of the interviews taken from the

verbatim transcripts. These expressions are "grouped on the basis of similarities,

differences or complementarities" (Beaty et al., in press). Decisions are made whether the

expressions are similar aspects of the same conceptualization or whether they refer to

different conceptualizations. Both referential and structural aspects of meaning are taken

into account: as previously explained, these aspects are interrelated although they can be

separated for the purpose of analysis. Interpretation must be made in relation to the context

in which each expression resides since the same expression in another context could take on

a different meaning. The expressions are then grouped according to their similarities and

the "phenomena in question is narrowed down to and interpreted in terms of selected quotes

from all the interviews" (Marton, 1986, p. 42).

During phase two of the analysis these selected quotes become the data pool and the

focus now shifts from the individual interviews to the meaning which is embedded in the pool

of quotations "regardless of whether these different meanings originated from the same

individuals or not" (Marton & Saljo, 1984, p. 38). Therefore, each expression in fact has

two meanings: the meaning which it holds in the context in which it occurred and the

meaning according to the pool to which it is assigned. Interpretation and refinement of the

attributes for each conception actively reverberates between these two contexts.

Expressions are placed into a certain group based on the similarities between them, while

groups of meaning are delineated by their differences. Each group will, in the end, consist of

a series of expressions and descriptive criteria. While traditional research pre-determines

categories, a phenomenographical approach allows the meanings attributed to the quotations

to determine the categories. The process is "tedious, time-consuming, labor-intensive and

interactive" (Marton, 1986, p. 43) but eventually things begin to stabilize and the

categories become clear to form the outcome space, or the categories of description in which the students' thinking ranges.

Since the process of finding the categories of description is an act of discovery and construction on the part of the investigator, the findings do not have to be replicable (Marton, 1986; Renstrom, Andersson, & Marton, 1988; Saljo, 1988). It is possible that another researcher may arrive at a different set of categories. However, the process of investigation should be understandable and once the categories have been identified they should be communicable to other researchers. There should be a high degree of agreement regarding their absence or presence.

The issue of trustworthiness within research methodology has usefully been reconceptualized by Guba (1981) and Lincoln and Guba (1985). Four main criteria for judging the trustworthiness of all inquiries have been identified as being: (a) truth value - which maintains that confidence must be established in the findings of the inquiry for the subjects and the context of the inquiry, (b) applicability - which raises the question to what degree the findings are applicable in other situations, (c) consistency - which questions whether the findings could be repeated given the same or similar subjects and a similar context, and (d) neutrality - which questions the degree to which the researcher can be removed from the findings and allow the findings to stand alone. These will now be further explored as they pertain to this study.

In the area of truth value researchers in the rationalistic paradigm believe that context-free truth statements can be made and thus seek to find similarities that lead to generalizations. Since the naturalist's framework accepts multiple realities and seeks description which is by its very nature context-bound, the most logical consequence for the aspect of truth value is to consider credibility. For the credibility of findings some kind of testing of interpretations with other sources could be used. One way has been called "member checks" (Guba, 1981) which refers to a process of testing the data with members

of a relevant source group. A type of checking used in this study and referred to as the process of "co-judging" by phenomenographers, can ascertain the communicability of the meanings of the descriptions of categories once they have been placed in an outcome space (Marton, 1988). In addressing the credibility of the final interpretations a process of co-judging was used. This served as a process of testing the communicability of the categories and of ascertaining credibility of the study. Two judges, both respected educators with research backgrounds, were provided with the conceptions and their definitions along with a set of exemplifying quotations and were asked to classify the quotations and conceptions using procedures similar to those used by the investigator. According to Johannson, Marton, & Svensson (1984) there should be agreement within the range of 75-100%. In this study there was a 96% percentage agreement. This met the inherent challenge in that the findings are communicable and clearly understandable. This process is more fully detailed in Chapter 4.

Within a phenomenographic study as previously described, the units of meanings have two meanings: one in the outcome space and another in their original context. This second area must also be communicable in order to render credibility to the context and the method. In this study, the issues surrounding credibility have been addressed as follows. In the area of credibility of the context and method I became very familiar with the classroom culture in which the children were learning. I have a personal/professional relationship with the teacher of the class which is further explained in Chapter 4. I also visited the classroom on several occasions and familiarized myself with the setting and allowed children to interact with me, both in an informal sense and within a dramatic context. Second, my assumptions about learning and drama have been identified and stated within this study and have been shown to complement those of the research method. In doing this, I intentionally revealed the personal biases which I bring to the study. Third, the data have been fully recorded and personally transcribed within six months of the interviews. All the phases of

analysis of the raw data are archived so the possibility of reviewing the process has not been precluded. This leaves the possibility of member-checking or returning to the subjects both during and after the study to review interpretations of their statements. During the interview process there was ongoing vigilance and reflective questioning to check the interpretation of information with the subjects. However I did not return to them at a later time to check interpretations. Given the ages of the children (9-11 years) my professional judgment was that this would not be appropriate.

The criteria of applicability within the rationalistic paradigm is determined through generalizability. In the naturalistic paradigm this would not be possible since the findings are closely connected to the context. However, while it may be impossible to construct generalizations from the study, context-relevant statements should be able to be made and given ample description and aspects of the study should be able to be transferred to similar studies. In this study, the implications which arise from the analysis are found in Chapter 6 and it is hoped that the findings will contribute to other studies and similar situations in the field of drama in education. Furthermore, the description, both of my personal journey during this study which is interwoven throughout, and the analysis should provide sufficient information for transfer possibilities to other contexts.

The criteria of consistency in the rationalistic paradigm concerns the issue of reliability: if instruments are seen to produce stable results, then the results are seen to be stable and meaningful. In the naturalistic paradigm there is also a concern for consistency but given the belief of multiple realities and given that the instruments are human beings, the concept of "instrument error" can no longer apply. "Inquirers are human and cannot escape their humanness" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 88). Interpretations and insights can change. Thus for the naturalist the concept of consistency is interpreted to mean dependability of stability of the data with allowance for variance. One of the suggestions made by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is to establish an "audit trail" whereby the

processes and results of the data are logged. In this study, it would be possible to retrack the steps followed throughout the investigation by reviewing the transcripts of the data, the notations made during the lengthy and complicated discovery process that lead to the final analysis and presentation of the conceptions.

The fourth area for judging trustworthiness is the area of neutrality and is viewed as objectivity in the rationalistic paradigm. Because there is a belief that invariant truths are being uncovered, there is an emphasis on the methodology being replicable and the assurance of some distance between investigator and subject. The naturalist however, believes in multiple realities and is aiming at describing some aspect of reality. The researcher fully accepts the human element with its variety of presuppositions. Therefore the emphasis is shifted towards the data and the question becomes one of being able to confirm and communicate the data which has been produced. In this study the beliefs and assumptions that I bring to the investigation have been stated. The context has been clearly described and to confirm the communicability of the data the process of co-judging was undertaken.

## SUMMARY

In summary, the trustworthiness of this study has been reframed in accordance with the naturalistic paradigm. This study is an exploratory one and the results are a description of that journey. It is thus appropriate that trustworthiness would be established by the quality and breadth of the description, and by the communicability of the findings.

This chapter has reviewed the research perspective, studies pertinent to the investigation, the relational view of learning, and the procedure for analysis. The following chapter will focus more specifically on the design of the study.

## 4. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an understanding of the design of the study and its implementation  The details of the data collection and analysis procedure are described and are necessarily detailed in accordance with the phenomenographical method.

### DATA COLLECTION

### Criteria for the Selection of Subjects

For the purposes of providing a description which offers variation in the ways in which children view the dramatic process, 15 children who met the following criteria were chosen for the study.

1. The subjects should be identified as accepting drama as an integral part of their classroom work.

2. The subjects should be at ease with discussions regarding their own learning.

### Criteria for Selection of Teacher

For the purpose of providing a classroom setting where drama is used as a way into learning, as opposed to a skill oriented or theatrical manner, the teacher needed to meet the following  criteria.

1. The teacher should have a thorough understanding of drama in education.

2. The teacher should be the regular classroom teacher as opposed to being a specialist.

3. The teacher should be using drama as an integral part of the classroom program.

4. The teacher should create a reflective atmosphere in the classroom where purposeful discussions are the norm.

**Selection of Teacher and Students**

The search for subjects who would meet the established criteria began with the teacher who would meet the established criteria for the teacher since the criteria for the students so heavily depend on those of the teacher. Two possible teachers were identified, one at a primary grade level and the other at the intermediate grade level. I was fortunate in having worked with both these teachers in some capacity and was confident that both of the teachers and their classes would meet the criteria. One of the teachers was approached and consented to participating in the study. Written permission was requested of the Ethics Committee at the University of British Columbia, the Richmond School Board, the principal of the school and the parents. Parents were assured of confidentiality: children's names would be altered and data would be used only in the realms of educational study. Permission was granted by all parties with the exception of one parent. Sessions for observation and interviewing were scheduled, first for a pilot study and then for the study itself. The following profiles provide evidence of the appropriateness of the teacher and the subjects.

**Profile of Teacher**

The teacher selected has a reputation of being a strong generalist teacher with 15 years of teaching experience at the intermediate level. She has a particularly solid background in the area of Language Arts. She has a thorough understanding of drama in education, having attended university courses taught by three leading drama educators: Ken Byron, Carole Tarlington, and Patrick Verriour. Furthermore, the teacher has cooperatively designed dramas with me and led workshops both locally, provincially and nationally. Drama has been used successfully over the past eight years in her classroom, most often integrated in subject areas such as Social Studies, Literature or Science. Her recent interest has been to provide links into other subject areas and to teach in an integrated manner. The environment created in her classroom could well be described as a process-oriented classroom in that it is structured, organized and supportive in giving

learners confidence to take risks, make new discoveries and make meanings for themselves (Felton, & Stoessiger, 1987; Neelands, 1984). Reflective discussions are held routinely in this teacher's class. They are thought-provoking and lead children to make links with historical, literary, present and personal events in a wide variety of contexts. This teacher likes children, respects individual differences and provides a challenging and vital learning environment. She presently teaches all subjects with the exception of Physical Education and French.

The teacher and I have a long standing professional relationship having team taught together in an open area grade six classroom for four years. The professional relationship that developed at that time was characterized by a high degree of trust and openness. We cooperatively developed and implemented several sustained dramas presented them at various in-service sessions for teachers. One such drama was video-taped by the Ministry of Education to become part of a Social Studies resource kit (Province of British Columbia, 1986b).

For the purposes of this study, it was my intention to choose the best possible situation where drama was being used creatively and skillfully and where children were feeling supported. It was also my intention to choose a situation that could be understood and described easily so that there would be minimal risk of misunderstandings in the nature of the data. I am fully confident that this situation was the best one for this study.

**Profile of Subjects**

The 15 students selected for this study range in ages from 10 to 12. They were in a combined class of grades 5 and 6. Four of the children had been with the teacher during the previous year. The students had all experienced drama as part of their regular classroom program. Reflection was a norm and students participated both orally and in written form. All students in the class were willing and eager to participate in the project and thus all

students were interviewed. This also gave me the opportunity to choose 15 interviews for the data analysis out of the 26 who participated.

**Setting**

The elementary school has a population of just over four hundred students. It consists of two buildings in an older architectural style. The atmosphere is pleasant, comfortable and child-centered. It is situated in an older part of the community and is surrounded by homes. Children attending the school come from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds.

The classroom space is small for 27 students. It is fully carpeted and brightly lit. Many activities are grouped and students frequently use the hall as an additional space. Furniture consists of individual desks, usually grouped for instruction. A central open space at one end of the classroom serves as a meeting place where discussions occur with students on the floor. Students are at ease with flexible classroom arrangements and timetabling.

**Time and Location**

The study took place over the course of one school year. I observed the class working with drama for two hours in November, 1989; and for two one hour sessions in April, 1990; for a total of three sessions. Interviews with the subjects preceded or closely followed the sessions, with the longest interval being a two-week period. The interview sessions were scheduled in the early morning before class began as well as during class time. They took place first in a storage room and then in the staff room due to lighting problems in the storage room. The latter offered less privacy in that other staff members were occasionally working or conferring. The interviews ranged in length from 15 to 25 minutes.

**Recording Equipment**

Interviews are recorded on a voice-activated Sanyo mini-cassette tape recorder. Of the 27 students registered in the class, 26 were interviewed, since one child was not granted parental permission to take part in the study. Upon listening to all interviews several times, three were deemed not to contain any new information, the remaining 23 interviews were fully transcribed and 15 were used for the study. These 15 to chosen to represent the greatest possible variation.

**Pilot Study**

A pilot study with three students was completed in November, 1989; following the observation of the first drama. Each student was interviewed individually for approximately one half hour. The purpose of the pilot study was to test the lead questions and to investigate the possibility of gathering some of the data in role. Following the pilot study I consulted with my advisor and decided to retain the questions as designed, and to proceed in a traditional interview manner as opposed to being in role for any part of the interview. Although the notion of gathering some of the data in role was an interesting one I decided that it would create an unwieldy management problem in that it would only be possible to interact with a few students during one drama. It would also be difficult to pose questions which would be true to the drama and serve the purposes of this particular study.

**Observation Sessions**

I spent three observation periods in the classroom although there were several other occasions when routine work as a consultant in the district allowed me to have informal contact with the children. My rapport with the children was relaxed, and I sensed an easy curiosity developing in their interest in the study. This atmosphere of familiarity and trust was carried into the interview situation.

The purpose of the observation sessions was to contextualize references made by the subjects for me. It also provided a common experience for the children and myself. During the observation periods in each case I took a small role in the drama. The following is a description of the background of the each of the two dramas as well as of the individual lessons observed.

## DRAMA 1: A COMMUNITY IN PERIL 2089 A.D.

### Description of the Unit

This futuristic drama had been collaboratively designed by the the teacher and myself in 1982. As implemented in this classroom, its curricular content was integrated in the subject areas of Science, Literature, Art and Writing. The cognitive underpinnings were problem solving, decision making and taking a point of view. For two months students studied the effects of pollution on planetary life, particularly on the forests.

In preparation for the drama, students collectively imagined a futuristic setting for the community in which they currently live. Wall murals were created to depict aspects of the community such as transportation, buildings and clothing. These decorated the classroom walls as well as the hallways outside the room. Through visualization, writing, portrait drawing and interviewing in role, each child created an individual role as an adult citizen living in this community. Personal identification cards (PIC cards) were name tags and used as symbols to begin work in role. Previous drama lessons had included some dramatic games, work with tableau, and interviewing in role.

### Discussion With the Class

Prior to the lesson, I had a discussion with the students and explained the purpose of the study, my past work in drama, and my relationship with their teacher. Students had an opportunity to ask questions. I then assumed the role of a visiting professor from a nearby university and participated in an interview led by the teacher in role as a citizen of the futuristic community. The interview served two purposes: (a) as direct teaching in that

the interview provided the students with a model of questioning techniques, and (b) as a way of becoming comfortable with me.

## Observation

Students were guided into role through a visualization led by the teacher and through the symbolic pinning of their PIC cards. As citizens of the community they then mingled, interviewing each other regarding their positions in the community and their thoughts as to how the community was dealing with pollution and environmental issues. I interrupted the proceedings and entered in role as an announcer urging all citizens to proceed to a central meeting area for an emergency meeting. The classroom furniture was rearranged and the citizens ushered into the meeting area. The teacher entered in role as the mayor of the community while I observed the meeting still in role as a visiting professor. An issue was presented by the mayor: a neighboring community was in a crisis due to a pollutant in the water which was causing disease. The citizens needed to be evacuated. The emergency meeting had been called to consider whether the assembled citizens would be willing to absorb a large influx of people into their community, meaning that each citizen would need to welcome strangers into the home. Crucial tree cultivation projects also would need to be abandoned to make room for housing and the health threats would have to be considered. A discussion ensued with no clear decision being reached. The students were taken out of role and presented with an in-role writing assignment regarding their views of the situation and their position on the issue.

## DRAMA 2: A SQUIRE'S DILEMMA

### Description of the Unit

The curricular context of this drama was nestled in the areas of Social Studies, Literature, Science and Art. The cognitive underpinnings for this drama centered around the issue of loyalty and family pressures. Prior to the drama lesson observed, the students had

studied fortification and social organization at the time of the middle ages. Each student had developed an individual role as a young male squire in training to become a knight in armour. A large, three dimensional model of a castle was constructed, individual portraits of the squires had been drawn and numerous other artistic depictions of life in the middle ages had been completed.

**Drama 2:   Observation 1**

Two drama lessons were observed within the space of one week. During the first lesson a gathering of the young squires was called by the knight in charge of the training, the teacher in role as Sir Geoffrey. The gathering was a routine training day. Prior to beginning the lesson the teacher had again prearranged that I interrupt proceedings, this time in role as a messenger who delivered a sealed letter. After some interacting in role with the students, I entered and delivered the letter. The teacher-in-role read it quietly and then explained the contents to the students: an urgent call had been sent out for more knights to join the crusade, young squires-in-training should be chosen for early knighthood and be sent to join the forces.

At this point the teacher stopped the drama and assigned a piece of writing to be completed in role as squires. Students were to discuss their reaction to the situation and to describe their personal wishes for their future.

**Drama 2:   Observation 2**

A week later the gathering of squires in training was reconvened. The teacher in role as Sir Geoffrey interrogated the students in role as squires regarding their preparedness to join the crusade. Those who felt ready are told to stand on one side of the room while the others were to stand on the opposite side. I took on the role of a guard at the door who ushered in one of the students in role as the sister of a squire who was unwilling to join the crusade. This student had been prepared in advance by the teacher to play the role of an angry sister upset with her brother for not being willing to uphold the family honor despite

the fact that his father had wished him, his only son, to proceed with early knighthood. The teacher in role as Sir Geoffrey interrogated the girl, chided her for interrupting the meeting and sent her away. Sir Geoffrey then turned to the group of squires for their reaction and finally to the girl's brother for his final decision: Would he wish to change his mind? This student had been unprepared for this and remained firm in his resolve not to join the crusade, indicating that he did not feel ready. The teacher stopped the drama and assigned a reflective piece of drama where students were asked to write their reactions to the situation and to conclude with stating their final opinion regarding the dissident squire.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Semi-structured interviews were conducted. The research question "What are children's conceptions of drama when used by a non-specialist teacher as an integral part of learning?" was addressed through introductory questions followed by questions aimed at clarifying responses and eliciting more depth. It was my intention to have the children do the most amount of talking. My role was to adopt a value free approach and to ask questions from a stance of curiosity and trust in their logic (Bell, Osborne, & Tasker, 1985). The following questions were used as a guide during the interview, although variations occurred during the natural flow of each interview (see Appendix 1).

1. Tell me how this drama works.

2. What helps you pretend that you are someone else?

3. How can you tell when others are doing it really well?

4. How can you tell if your teacher is doing it well?

5. How can you tell if it is going well for you?

6. How do you feel when you see other people doing drama?

7. What might be some of the good things and some of the not-so-good things about doing drama?

8. What have you learned for your own life from all of this? Has doing drama changed your thinking about anything?

9. Why do you think a teacher might decide to use drama for teaching something like this unit?

10. What do your parents think of this?

11. If someone asked you "So what is this drama you are doing in class?" what would you say?

The questions were structured in a way that I hoped would quickly create an atmosphere of trust and safety. At the onset of each interview I reviewed the purpose of the session and asked the child about his/her comfort with being tape recorded. My initial questions were designed to be open and descriptive, while later questions probed more deeply into the child's beliefs and personal views. The questions also reflected the research methodology in that questions 1 to 5 tended to probe into structural areas, while questions 6 to 11 probed into referential areas. Following is a more detailed description of the rationale behind the design of each question.

Question 1 is a descriptive question and was designed to allow the subject to become comfortable with the interviewing process while establishing a base of understanding.

Questions 2 through 6 allow for description of affective and evaluative reactions to the dramatic process, both by describing personal experience as well as by allowing reflection on the observations of others.

Questions 7, 8, and 9 afford the subject the opportunity to abstract personal reactions.

As the interviews progressed, several questions were found to be more easily answered when subjects were given an opportunity to personalize responses through imaginary role taking. Question 9 frequently was worded in versions such as "I'm going to ask you to put on an imaginary teacher's hat. Suppose that you are the teacher and you are

doing drama in class. One day the principal walked in and begins to challenge you about this teaching method, what would you say?" The same was true of Question 11 where subjects were frequently given a parallel situation such as "Suppose someone did not know how to play baseball and asked you what this game was all about, you might say that you needed a ball and a diamond with bases. Now let's say someone would say what is this drama all about, how might you answer?" I felt that this preamble to the question would serve to make the question less abstract and subsequently judged that for some this was a welcomed approach.

Question 10 serves as a potential rest from the intensity in that children could refer to specific comments made by their parents. Question 11 is the summative question, sometimes referred to as the "embedded question" which was structured to allow the child to review the essential beliefs about drama and "to bring out what has been taken for granted in the discussion between the interviewer and the subject" (Saljo, 1979, p. 9).

**ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Of the 26 tape-recorded interviews, 23 were transcribed. Upon the initial listening of all interviews, it was determined that three of the interviews yielded no information that was radically different from the remaining interviews and since the purpose was to look for variation, three interviews were eliminated. In the same way, 15 interviews were chosen for the analysis which followed the phenomenographic tradition and evolved in the following phases.

The initial thematization involved reading and re-reading seven randomly chosen interviews offering differences in children's views. This yielded 40 potential key words or topics which were thought to refer to categories of descriptions. Upon reflection it became clear that this first attempt produced categories that were superficial in nature, partially due to the reliance on favoured words or phrases. I soon realized that I had been lured by individual words and that I was allowing this step to evolve much too rapidly. In addition to

this, the number of key words, which would have lead to the number of categories, was found to be unwieldy.

The thematization process was initiated anew with an in-depth analysis using only three interviews. Quotations identified as meaningful and unique were grouped into categories. This time there was a much more careful and constant moving back and forth from the context of the interview to the context of the emerging pool of data. Meanings of individual words provided clues but, more importantly, were checked and rechecked as to their meaning within the specific context. This hermeneutic process produced six statements referring to global aspects of possible conceptions. These statements were found to be workable both in quality and quantity.

Before proceeding with other interviews, an additional step was taken: all the interviews were abridged by eliminating my questions and reactions. This allowed the subject's voice to be read without interruption and I found that this purity of voice allowed analysis to proceed more clearly. In the steps that followed with the remaining twelve interviews there was, nonetheless, a frequent turning back to the full version of the interview for the contextualization of the comments within the flow of the questions and answers.

The abridged data continued to be used in the next stage which led to the identification of the final conceptions. This was a "messy, organic" stage where I experimented with images and personal reactions to each interview. By looking at the data through reflective questions such as "What is this person really saying here?" or "What might this part say about his beliefs about the dramatic process", or "How might the inner stance of this person look in exaggerated form?", I formed impressions that were more metaphoric in nature. For example, in some parts of the interviews I imagined the subjects to be responding to the drama in the classroom as a weavers of thoughts and ideas, as a dutiful and well trained soldiers, or as a players in a game. Individual quotations lifted from the interviews helped

produce the full vision of what a "weaver", a "soldier" or a "player" might be like in regards to drama in the classroom. Responding freely like this became an exhilarating experience for me and allowed me to move beyond the literal meanings of the words. I clustered, imaged and designed symbols for the groupings, and thus found that I had a more affective, holistic sense of their meaning. Noteworthy also was the usefulness of the first and final statements made by subjects in the interview since these statements frequently contained the essence of at least one conception that has been illustrated throughout the interview. At the end of this stage I settled on six conceptions which were listed as the following metaphors: drama as tool, drama as duty, drama as web, drama as entity with a life of its own, drama as novelty and drama as cloak.

The next phase involved defining clearly the structural and referential aspects of each of the conceptions. This continued to be a lengthy, iterative process which moved constantly between the contexts and within the contexts in an attempt to clarify the existence of the conceptions and their boundaries. It was at this point that I decided that the metaphoric expressions, while attractive in a poetic sense, were somewhat open to misinterpretation and clear statements representing each conceptions were necessary. It was also during this phase that a seventh conception, at first called "drama as play", emerged.

The final review of the conceptions focussed on the relationships between them. I asked myself questions such as "How are these views related to each other?" and "What sub-themes, purposes or metaviews do the conceptions have in common?" It was found that while the conceptions do overlap, some could be clustered together around central themes: three conceptions had the common view of drama as a purposeful activity within school; as a strategy used by a teacher. Three other conceptions fell into a category that viewed drama from within the entire process, from the point of view of the participants. The remaining conception dealt with a very specific area of drama in education and included the points of view of both teacher and students.

Thus, the final seven conceptions were seen to have individual structural and referential aspects and were also seen to be related to each other. These descriptions and relationships are seen on Table 1, page 62; Table 2, page 70; Table 3, page 82 and constitute the outcome space of this study. They are firmly grounded in the data.

## CO-JUDGING PROCESS

A system of co-judging was used to ascertain that the findings of the study had truth value and were communicable. Criteria for choosing co-judges were as follows:

1. co-judges should be familiar with educational research;

2. co-judges should have some familiarity with the area of drama in education.

Two co-judges were chosen to independently categorize the quotations into the seven conceptions described.

### Profile of Co-judge A:   Elizabeth Eades

Ms. Eades is a principal of an elementary school. She is also an occasional sessional instructor in the Department of Language Education at the University of British Columbia. She is an author of a Language Arts series currently in press and is particularly well versed in the areas of children's literature, the process of writing and evaluation. Although not a drama specialist, Ms. Eades is familiar with drama in education and most importantly, has the reputation of being a superb educator who knows children well.

### Profile of Co-judge B:   Carole Tarlington

Ms. Tarlington is presently the director of a youth theatre company which she founded. She has an extensive background in theatre and drama in education, having studied with notable drama educators such as Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton. She has worked as a regular classroom teacher, a consultant for drama in education and a sessional instructor in the Department of Language Education at the University of British Columbia. She has written articles in the field of drama in education and has authored two books on the subject.

## Co-judging Results

The results of the co-judging, although only one of the criteria for ascertaining the trustworthiness of the research, are described here in the keeping with the phenomenographic method. The co-judging process is designed to test the communicability of the categories. To begin, a pilot co-judge, well-versed in drama in education and familiar with this study, was given information on each conception and was asked to place each of 25 units of meaning from the interviews with its correct conception. This proved to be fairly challenging. Frequently it was found that the co-judge focussed on parts of a unit of meaning or parts of the definition of the conception which caused her to make a decision which was in variance to the placement of the results as described in the study. It became very clear that the highly interpretive nature of the analysis made accurate judging extremely difficult given only written documentation. Compared to my lengthy and iterative process of analysis which resulted in the conceptions as described, the co-judge had a very small amount of information, and a very limited amount of time. This process was not set out to be a matching test, but rather a test of communicability. In a discussion with the co-judge I explained my reasoning for the placements to ascertain whether these were understandable to her. Thereafter a much higher agreement was reached. It was then decided to include this phase in the final judging process, so that after the initial matching of quotations and conceptions, the incongruous units of meaning would be identified and the co-judge would be asked to reconsider them. My placements would be explained and those placements which could clearly be agreed upon would be considered for the final judgement. This would be considered the final test of the communicability of the findings.

The two co-judges were provided with the following materials: the set of tables which provide an overview of the outcome space, a detailed summary of each conception complete with exemplifying quotations, and 25 excerpts which were to be matched to the conceptions. They were given guidelines which indicated that each conception would in the

end be matched with no less than three, and no more than five units of meaning which were excerpts from the interviews. I was available to clarify questions during the process. Each co-judge spent approximately one hour completing the task. In each case the initial judging was completed with incongruous placements which needed to be reconsidered. In each case, in the second placement and in the communication of my placements, the agreement was 96%, with one unit of meaning remaining open to differing interpretations. Thus the communication of the findings was found to establish confidence among the co-judges.

## SUMMARY

The three major procedures of this study, the data collection, the interview process and the analysis, have been fully detailed in this chapter. This provides the background for the understanding and appreciation of the results of analysis which appear in the following chapter.

# 5. RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

In this chapter the results of the investigation are discussed. The device used to describe the data is the heuristic notion of conceptions since this study is "a search for the discovery of meaning and essence in significant human experience" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 40). The central concern, therefore, is with the meaning which the children attach to the dramatic experience; it is with the quality of the experience as interpreted by them.

Of interest in this study are the different kinds of conceptions which students at the grade 5/6 level might hold and how these conceptions might influence their understanding of, and their participation in the dramatic process. During individual interviews grades 5/6 students were asked to discuss their experiences with and views of drama when used as a medium for education. The contents of this chapter include the seven conceptions which emerged, key descriptors for the referential and structural aspects of each as well as illustrative quotations for each conception.

In describing the seven conceptions, it is clear that these are not descriptions of individual students since in no case was it found that an individual student held only one conception. Nor was it found that all aspects of a conception were displayed by any one student. Instead, students frequently held several different conceptions, at times even ones which may seem to be contradictory in nature.

In order to show the nature of the conceptions and their relationship one to another the referential aspect and structural aspect have been discussed with illustrative quotations. The referential aspect refers to how the conception makes itself known. It is the global or general aspect of the conception and answered the questions "What is this conception? What does it accomplish? What is its effect?" The structural aspect is the organizational aspect and is most often defined in terms of how it makes itself known through the actions of the

students and teacher. It answered the questions "How is it done? What are its parts? How are they related to each other?" These two aspects are intertwined and cannot be understood apart from one another (Pratt, 1990; Stalker, 1989). Similar models for description have been used in other studies, most frequently with more complexity (Beaty, et al., in press; Pratt, 1990; Saljo, 1984; Stalker, 1989). For the purposes of this study, discussion has been limited to the differentiations which the two aspects can offer in clarifying the conceptions and their relationships to each other.

The seven conceptions were found to fall into groups according to central commonalities and are presented in the three subsections below. They are described in more detail throughout this chapter, beginning in each case with a table presenting the overview of the referential and structural aspects of each conception.

Group A: Children's conceptions of drama as used by teacher

1. Drama is a tool.

2. Drama is a way of linking.

3. Drama is a novel way of teaching.

Group B: Children's conceptions of drama as experienced by participants

4. Drama is something one must take part in.

5. Drama is play.

6. Drama takes on a life of its own.

Group C: Children's conceptions of a specific aspect of drama

7. Role taking is like donning a cloak.

**TABLE 1**

**GROUP A.  CHILDREN'S CONCEPTIONS OF DRAMA AS USED BY TEACHER**

**1. DRAMA IS A TOOL**

REFERENTIAL
• efficient,
  mechanistic tool
• supports learning
  in other subjects
• fosters thinking
  skills
• prepares for
  the future

STRUCTURAL
• participation
• observation
• acting
• listening
• identification with
  characters
• reflection
• practice

• purposefulness
• strategic

**2. DRAMA IS A WAY
OF LINKING**

REFERENTIAL
• framework for
  information
• equal partnership
  with subject areas

STRUCTURAL
• making personal
  connections
• understanding
  of the purpose

**3. DRAMA IS A NOVEL
WAY OF TEACHING**

REFERENTIAL
• unusual
• a change
• a lure

STRUCTURAL
• choice
• aroused curiosity
• willing attendance

**GROUP A: CHILDREN'S CONCEPTIONS OF DRAMA AS USED BY TEACHER**

Conceptions in this group are those which display aspects of the dramatic process as something used by and designed by the teacher for the purpose of teaching the students. Conceptions are similar in that there is a sense of purpose and usefulness. Drama is seen as a strategy which teachers use and students can make use of. There is a sense of drama being a framework organized from the exterior.

**Conception 1: Drama is a tool**

The main referential feature of the conception <u>Drama is a tool</u> is that drama is an instrument and has a strong sense of purpose. It has a quality of efficiency, at times even a mechanistic one that implies speed and gets results.

> Investigator: You said a while ago it's educational, what do you mean by that?
>
> Carlos: Well, like you're using your imagination, like the kind of the brain that's the fiction part and the non-fiction part, sort of, there's the imagination and you're building on your imagination stuff and with the types of things that we do and the types of problems; that's educational too. 'Cause you could do the same things only you'd have to read books and stuff and have to write down notes and stuff off the board and things like that and instead I think this way is also a lot quicker.
>
> Investigator: How's that?
>
> Carlos: Well, like you can go into role once and like talk and stuff because talking is a lot quicker than reading and writing and stuff so you can go into role and talk and everything and get the ideas in your brain and then they'll be there forever instead you could write them down in a book and you'd have to go finding them and reading them.

Drama is thus regarded neither as a frill, nor as an add-on. It is respected and its importance is understood. As a tool, the specific purposes for drama can vary. Three identified purposes which will be discussed in more detail are:

1. it can act as a support for the learnings in other subjects;

2. it can foster thinking skills;

3. it can help prepare students for the future.

As a tool, drama is seen as working in concert with other subjects. This assisting is seen as unidirectional in that drama is seen as subservient to other subjects. In other words, drama helps students in other areas of the curriculum but other areas are not necessarily functional in enhancing the work in drama. The inspiration for writing, for example, might come from drama, as might some of the understandings which arise in some content areas such as Social Studies or Science.

> Investigator: Now there are lots of other teachers that I know who never do this kind of drama. Do you think we should tell them about it and tell them to try it? If so, why?

> Jillian: Yah, I think it's a good idea to try drama because some kids who don't like to write, it make it more fun for them, and maybe they'll get ideas from it and be able to write better.

> Investigator: So is it just for the writing?

> Jillian: I can't really think of anything else to do with it but it also when we were doing drama it combined with Science and our castle work 'cause we learned different ways like friction and things like that so it also helps with Science too and things like that.

The structural aspect of this supportive role of drama is seen in quotations from the following students as they explain that it is through active participation that insights can occur. By observing one's own and others' feelings, and by acting, students are able to comprehend another world and have empathy for characters who may have lived in it. Drama thereby provides the opportunity to deepen the learning experience in a content area.

> Alice: ...like if you study about the crusades it helps us because during drama you see how other people's feelings are and you see your own cause I guess it kind of surprise yourself when you say out and like Janice and Carol did good jobs doing that...drama helps us a lot from acting out and from acting out the thoughts that you have and write in your book after what we do so I think it helps us a lot with our drama and I would tell the principal that we are doing our work we are studying and everything, we're listening to other people's thoughts and our own thoughts...

> Marion: ...because sometimes the books don't really give out people's feelings and all that, they just say that people felt different...

> Keith: I think you probably learn more after acting out the part you might know how they feel and stuff and the way they acted...so I guess you get their feelings too, sort of.

Drama as a tool is seen as an aid in fostering thinking which at times is simply seen

as an opportunity to think on one's own.

Adolf: ...from the book, already someone knew how it was and that was it, you're using something that someone has already thought; but when you act it, you think of your own, how to do it.

At other times the tool is seen as more directly instrumental in providing opportunities to

actually assist, or enable students think differently. This can be in the area of solving

problems, in being creative or in making attitudinal shifts.

Carlos: ...it teaches you how to solve problems and not to get so excited and everything. It also makes your imagination better...

Alice: ...it'll get more deeper thinking about the crusades and things and knights, and squires and things like that...

Jillian: Sometimes it makes me change my attitude...most kids are kind of mean to their parents and sometimes the way you go in drama it makes you realize that you don't really have to be that way...

Structurally, participating in drama means going into role and talking. This is seen as an

efficient way of learning and a powerful aid to memory and comprehension.

Investigator: ...does it help you with your studies?

Peter: Yah.

Investigator: How so?

Peter: If somebody tells you something in drama you can remember it more than if you read it out of a book.

Marion: ...if she's just reading it out of a book, we don't always understand what it is talking about but then when we have to be the person and act it out it's just explaining it more to us, we're understanding it more...

How this conception is actualized structurally, therefore, is by students identifying

with characters. They reflect about what occurred in a drama and link this with life outside

the classroom. This can result in a student being more thoughtful, as well as remembering

and comprehending more of that which they are enacting.

At a very practical level, drama is seen as a tool that can prepare students for further work in the school system, for potential careers in acting, and for life's challenges in the future.

> Art: ...through every subject you teach them drama and it's a kind of acting so when you get into like grade 8, grade 9, grade 10 you can try for things and if they try out for things the drama will be marked on their letter grades so they'll get a better grade...

> Jillian: Some of the drama is I think is getting us prepared for more harder work when we get older and it's also maybe if one of us wanted to be an actor or actress one day it prepares us for that, it helps us understand about drama...

> Penny: ...it sort of helps what it's going to be like in the future and the problems that we have to face when we're older and stuff like that...

Drama also offers an arena for practising the skill of speaking with others and in front of groups.

> Penny: ...you can sort of use your imagination and some people if they don't have any brothers or sisters they can't really do that they don't have any people to talk to and in drama it's a good way to do that.

> Marion: ...it helps to be able to speak out in front of a crowd...

The structural element here is implied to be one of practice. The implication is that over time, given repeated efforts and the natural process of growing older, the preparation will bring results.

In summary drama as seen from this conception is a purposeful instrument which is organized by the teacher to assist students in other subjects, to foster thinking, and to help prepare them for the future.

**Conception 2: Drama is a way of linking**

As in conception 1, Drama is a tool, drama here is seen as purposeful. Also as in conception 1, drama in this conception is seen as providing a framework for the integration of traditionally divided subject areas. Unlike conception 1, however, the main referential aspect is that the links with other subject areas are more as equal partnerships. Drama is seen as one of the important parts, rather than as a part which serves the other components.

> Helene: ...right now we're studying the castles and we're studying it in drama too so what do you mean by learning, because we're learning IN drama, like we're doing stuff, O.K., we're doing castles and then we started drama with castles squires, so we have to pretend we're squires now and I think we can learn from it because we read books and do work and watch movies about castle life and now we're going to act it.

> Jillian: ...writing I think is the main thing in drama, Science can be involved in it and also Social Studies 'cause castles is our Social Studies and with that we're writing about doing Social Studies things too, so that combines with lots of different work and Mathematical problems go along with Science.

Structurally, learning through drama offers possibilities for students to link with the concepts in other subject areas, to link with the ideas of their peers and to learn from them. This conception is moving away from a dependence on the teacher which was evident in the first conception. This is exemplified by Jillian's explanations below as well as by her use of the word "we".

> Jillian: When we're doing something writing that involves drama usually it really helps us believe more and get more ideas because Mrs. A. helps us a lot with our writing but in drama we don't need as much help because we're getting lots of ideas just with talking with each other and being someone different so it really helps us.

> Jillian: I would try to explain what it was, how we were relating it with our school work that it wasn't going to the theatre or watching or doing a play, that it was something that we get to be someone different and try and work at that and relate to the other people who are trying too...

From the point of view of control, there may be minimal control on the part of the students in the initial decisions regarding the integration of subject areas or in the design of the framework. However, there is an understanding, or at the very least an acceptance, on the part of students regarding the purpose of the integration of the subject areas. Furthermore, individual integration is evident in the personalizing of information. In the following quotation Marion also uses the collective pronoun "we" and although words such as "gave us" and "had to" might indicate less ownership, the overall sense is one of involved participation and a high degree of ownership within the task.

> Marion: ...we're basing it on real facts and stuff, like from a book, we'll go collect facts and we'll personalize them, write them all down, change them around a little bit...make like, we just did a medieval summary and that took forever, the teacher gave us about 200 facts to read and cut out and sort and then we had to write about

them and change the facts around and make it different so we're not copying a book but we're changing it to our own...

In summary, linking and integrating subjects as seen from this conception offers exciting possibilities for learning. Education seen from this conception is a continual process of bridging activities, subject areas and ideas, both from an external point of view as well as from an internal one.

## Conception 3: Drama is a novel way of teaching

Drama as seen from the perspective of this conception is something unusual and different. It is frequently described as "more fun" by the students. It shares a sense of purpose with Conceptions 1 and 2 and is also something about which the teacher makes decisions, anticipating that results for the students will be positive.

> Marion: ...it makes it more fun for us to learn in Socials, like she's teaching us our Socials but she's trying to make it fun for us so that we're not just sitting there all bored in our desks, like it really helps us in Socials to see what it was like in those years.

One of the global aspects is that it is viewed as a welcome change from the usual activities, as something different. While it is seen as very purposeful, there is a sense of liberation and freedom. Structurally, involvement is demanded of students, and the result is less boredom and more enjoyment. Two distinct referential aspects of the novelty as seen from the point of view of a teaching strategy emerge: drama is a change in teaching approach and drama is a lure to entice children to attend school.

Drama is seen as a change from other, more directed teaching approaches. It is active, challenging and allows for student choice.

> Anne: ...when we first started castle study, I thought this is going to be fun and when we got to the middle of it, getting into the real nitty-gritty stuff, I thought this is boring, and then we do drama, it sort of livens it up a bit.

> Penny: I think it's really fun and neat but I think it also helps you learn in a few ways...instead of just writing like with books and paper it's sort of more like a fun way and it helps you like get more into your work, it's more challenging in a way...you get to do whatever you want and it's not hard.

Because it is more enjoyable, it is easier to be involved and is also seen as being helpful in the learning process. In the following quotations, direct comparison shows that it is not only more enjoyable but that the results suggest that there is also more involvement on the part of students and that it helps them learn.

> Carlos: ...it's just a funner way than getting a whole bunch of things on the board you have to copy down and writing long paragraphs and stuff...

> Keith: ...I would just say it's a funner, better way of learning than just listening to the teacher or read the book.

Not only is drama a change but one of the results is that students' curiosity is piqued and there is a desire to see what will happen next. It is in this respect that it acts as a lure to help bring children to class. The anticipated structural consequences thus are that students attend school and attend with interest. Students can link activities from one school day to the next and can be emotionally involved in a positive manner.

> Keith: ...it makes me like school better than did when I was in grade one, that's for sure, I used to hate school in grade one, right now I like it...

> Penny: ...when Mrs. A. says O.K. tomorrow we're going to do drama, it sort of makes you want to go to school cause it's really interesting to see what we're going to do...

In summary, drama as seen from this conception continues to be seen as having a strong purpose. It is, however, also seen as a change to what may be expected in the classroom, it is fun and it encourages children to look forward to future classes.

**TABLE 2**

**GROUP B. CHILDREN'S CONCEPTIONS OF DRAMA AS EXPERIENCED BY PARTICIPANTS**

**4. DRAMA IS SOMETHING ONE MUST TAKE PART IN**

<u>REFERENTIAL</u>

• obligation
• exterior standard
• specific body
  of knowledge
• public accountability

<u>STRUCTURAL</u>

• response to teacher
• little questioning
• being alert
• quick thinking
• exposure

**5. DRAMA IS PLAY**

<u>REFERENTIAL</u>

• openness
• freedom
• fun
• well-being

<u>STRUCTURAL</u>

• being involved
• pretending
• exploring
• making choices

**6. DRAMA TAKES ON A LIFE OF ITS OWN**

<u>REFERENTIAL</u>

• organic
• open-ended
• surprise
• equality among
  participants
• shared ownership

<u>STRUCTURAL</u>

• trust in the process
• quick thinking
• imagination
• use personal
  resources
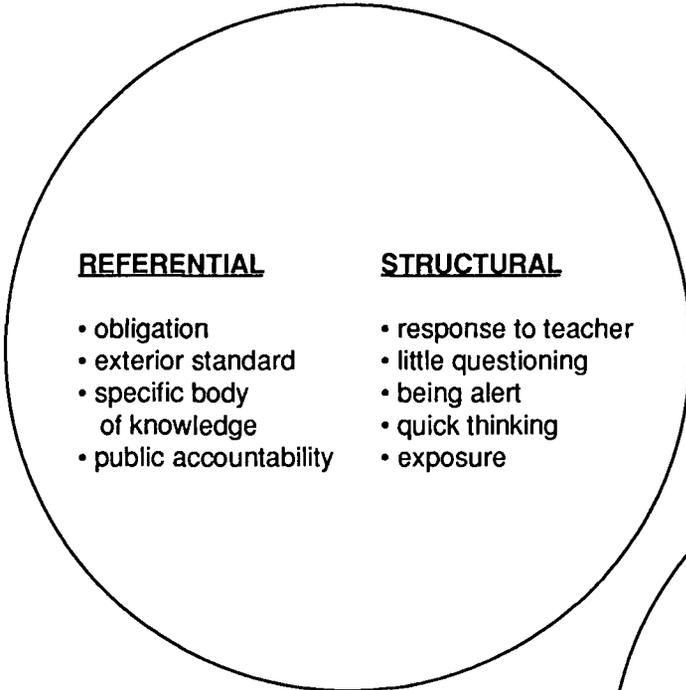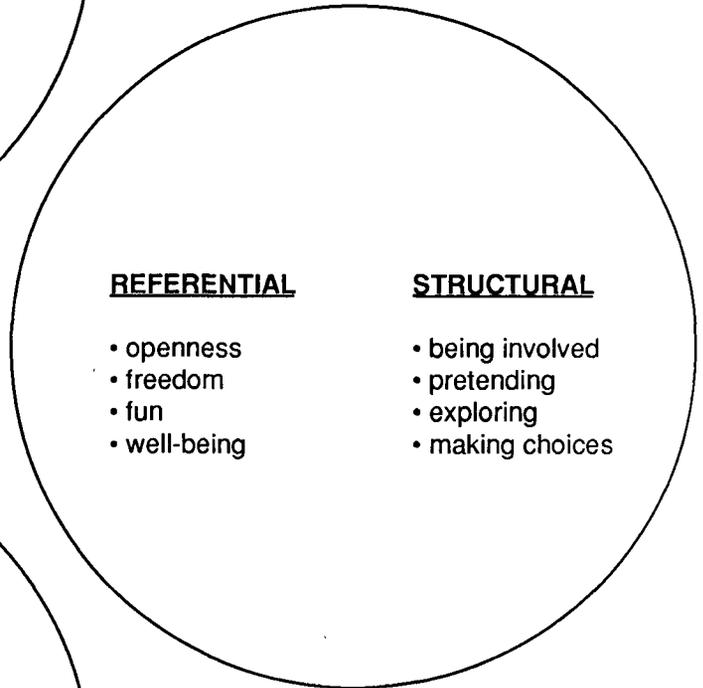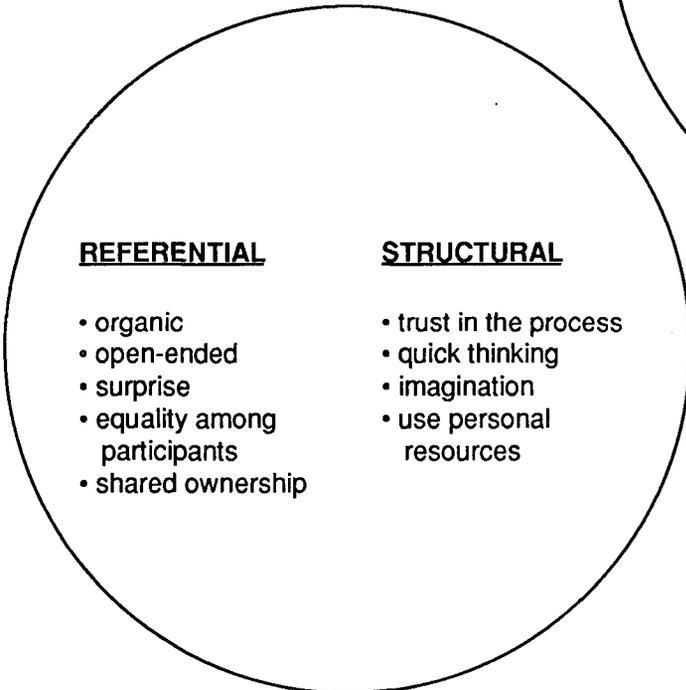
## GROUP B: CHILDREN'S CONCEPTIONS OF DRAMA AS EXPERIENCED BY PARTICIPANTS

Conceptions in this group are those which display students' experience of the entire dramatic process. The major commonality of the three conceptions in this group is that the point of view is that of participants in the drama looking at their reactions to it.

### Conception 4: Drama is something one must take part in

The major referential aspect of this conception is that drama is an act of responding to the teacher's guidance. Although cooperation with a teacher is part of the function of being a student, there is a sense here of obligation, even of resignation and acceptance of a hierarchical power relationship between teacher and student. An exterior standard exists and there is a certain way to do drama correctly. Structurally, the way that one participates in drama is by following the lead of the teacher without a lot of questioning.

Kitty: Mrs. A. just makes it up I guess.

Adolf: Mrs. A. thinks about it, thinks what we do, and then she tells us and then we act it...I don't know very much when Mrs. A. asks me questions about it, like I don't know what to say.

Anne: ...the teacher tells us what we're going to do, and then she introduces us to it and then the next day she talks to us about it and we just go along with her and sort of act it out.

The implication in the above quotations is that decisions are made at a distance, without students' knowledge or input. The responsibility and the ownership are seen to lie squarely on the shoulders of the teacher. From the vantage point of this conception, there is little sense of play, openness or freedom: the teacher is the one in charge, the one with the knowledge and skill which students must acquire.

Investigator: Has it changed any of your thinking in the way you look at life outside school?

Alice: I don't really know because it's hard to do drama without an instructor teaching you to do things like if you do it at home with your sisters and brothers and things like that it would be harder for them to understand because they wouldn't have any practice or wouldn't have any knowledge to do that.

Drama, as seen from this conception, has a specific body of knowledge which must be

acquired by both teachers and students before proceeding to work with it. There is a correct

way of doing it.

> Investigator: I know lots of teachers who aren't doing this kind of drama. Do you think we should tell them about it?
>
> Alice: I don't really know because if you tell other teachers and they don't really know what drama is about then they might do something wrong and their kids, the students will probably spread it around, and I wouldn't tell other teachers unless they had experience with plays and things.
>
> Investigator: And if they did have a bit of experience...do you think it would be good?
>
> Alice: Yah, then they can start teaching the students and maybe the students can teach other people and then drama would go all around.

Actions can be held up to be measured against exterior standards. There is a sense of

being on display for the teacher and a sense of exposure in front of one's peers.

> Kitty: ...I was kind of scared 'cause I don't really like to act and then I guess trying to think of what I was going to say, and that's about it.
>
> Peter: ...the part I don't like is when I have to stand up and say everything in front of everybody...

This same exterior standard can, however, be held up by the students in supporting

each other's learning, once they have advanced in skill. They can then move into the position

of standing in judgment of others and of coaching.

> Adolf: ...we were supposed to practise it so we know how and if he didn't look that good we tell him how it should be better, that happened to me many times when I did it so stupid.

The structural aspect of this conception thus is seen as occurring through the actions

of the students. The teacher leads and children learn by repeated efforts, by thinking ahead.

Peter describes how necessary it is to be alert in order to be able to follow the lead of his

teacher.

> Investigator: ...what's going through your mind when you're suddenly in a drama and you're somebody else?
>
> Peter: Trying to think what Mrs. A. is going to ask me so I know what to say.

Investigator: So you're thinking ahead?

Peter: Yah.

Investigator: Trying to second-guess her almost?

Peter: Yah.

Investigator: And what's that like?

Peter: She just, she'll ask people certain questions and sometimes she'll repeat them so if I'm one of the last people, I'll think of all the answers and if she says the question (that) has been repeated, I'll give her an answer straight away.

This conception lacks the sense of play or fluidity such as appears in Conception 5: Drama is play, or in the Conception 6: Drama takes on a life of its own where a sense of equality is evident. This conception allows for little student ownership. The control is outside of the children, therefore a consequence that results is frequently a negative emotional tension. There is no feeling of success until certain end-points are reached which are marked by approval from the outside. For the rest of the time there is discomfort until the approval is granted or until the lesson is over.

Adolf: ...sometimes you feel kind of embarrassed when you say something and everyone laughs but sometimes when everyone likes it then you feel happy you did something good...

Peter: I just am hoping she doesn't pick me to stand up.

Kitty: ...I was kind of scared 'cause I don't really like to act and then I guess trying to think of what I was going to say, and that's about it.

Kitty: ...relieved because I didn't have to do it again...

In contrast with the other conceptions in this group where students appear to feel a personal purpose in their involvement in drama, the aims tend to be unclear in the students' minds. There appears to be little sense of embracing the learning in a personal way. In the following excerpt of the interview with Kitty, for example, it is clear that her participation as she describes it in this part of the interview is one of minimal engagement, one of dutiful

response. Her answers are short, and the vocabulary used gives an indication of the underlying conception that involvement in drama is a part of school life to be endured.

Kitty: Mrs. A. just makes it up I guess.

Investigator: Where does she get the ideas from or where do you get the ideas from?

Kitty: I don't know.

Investigator: Does she give you the characters?

Kitty: Yes, well sometimes we make it up.

Investigator: You make your own character?

Kitty: Yah.

Investigator: Who were you in Richmond 2089?

Kitty: (Inaudible) or something, I don't know.

Investigator: ...While you're writing what's happening in your head?

Kitty: Just imagining the character that I'm supposed to be.

Investigator: O.K., so your imagination is important and you said you were reading as well. Do you read sometimes?

Kitty: Not much.

Investigator: Have you been studying about castles?

Kitty: Yes.

Investigator: So has that helped you imagine the squire?

Kitty: Pretty much.

Investigator: ... What was going through your mind as you were sitting there waiting for Mrs. A to come to you ...?

Kitty: Well, I was kind of scared 'cause I don't really like to act and then I guess trying to think of what I was going to say and that's about it.

In summary, this conception is based on dutiful responses of the students to an imagined exterior standard. The place of the student is to follow the lead of the teacher who

displays knowledge and skill. At times, when required, students must perform publicly so that they can be held accountable.

**Conception 5:   Drama is play**

Most children are intrigued by the 'as if 'world. The world of play, even for children ages 9,10 and 11, is an arena for pretending and make believe. It is likened to free activities in which children devise their own structure.

> Investigator:  Is it kind of like school or is it different?

> Anne:  It's different.

> Investigator:  How is it different?

> Anne:  It's kind of like when you're playing outside at recess when you just want to act or play a game.

This global aspect is further explained in the following quotation where Peter explains that pretending is central to drama.

> Investigator:  ...let's imagine that somebody who didn't know anything about drama at all...said to you what this kind of drama you're doing, what is it?  What would you say?

> Peter:  Getting people to pretend that they're somebody else and study, like if they're doing a study of castles they pretend that they're in castle life.

This is further extended by Jillian's quotation as she explains the sense of freedom, and the opportunity to explore and to express oneself.

> Investigator: I'm going to ask you to talk a little about the last drama you did. You did a fair amount of talking and interviewing. I was in one part of the morning and you spent almost the whole morning talking. What about that part of drama? What's good about that?

> Jillian: It's kind of fun to sort of talk about thing like that with your friends, pretending that they're someone different and pretending that you have a whole new life and the last thing that we did we were supposed to be adults and that was kind of neat pretending that we were older and that we were having our own house and what it would be like to do the bills and things like that. It's kind of neat.

Having this freedom is another central referential aspect to the definition of play for children at this age. Structurally this means that within the framework of a drama there is a wide variety of choices to be made.

> Jason: ...drama 's like being another person, it's like acting but you ...make pictures of being in the future, or in the past or whatever you want and you can be an adult, female, male, anything you want, you can be an animal probably, it's sort of like acting a bit, you can be anything you want, you can make stuff to go along, make settings, make pictures of yourself, and the future or the past, what you think you'd probably look like then.

> Art: We got a choice of who we wanted to be, what we wanted to do, and all those personal things...

> Jillian: ...she lets us make believe who we want to be.

The affective response to the exploration is frequently a very positive one, students spoke of the range of feelings that they attributed to the idea of "fun". Students' explanations and responses to this aspect of taking role were most often laced with enthusiasm and positive emotional responses. This was also noted, although not recorded, in the paralinguistic features of students' responses: the tone of voice, and body language.

> Jason: ...it's enjoyable, you get to be another person so that's fun to me.

> Jillian: It's kind of neat 'cause we get to sort of act out the way we want to feel...it's fun to make believe and to do things differently.

> Jillian: It's kind of fun to sort of talk about things like that with your friends pretending that they're someone different and pretending that you have a whole new life.

> Kit: ...it's fun...I feel good when I pretend.

> Keith: ...I like drama a lot...my favorite part is just when we're just actually acting out the parts of how they would act in the future or the past that's really neat...but it's funner when you're actually doing parts that they lived I guess I like it better than reading a book.

Not only is it enjoyable and a change, but the end result can be a feeling of well-being and a sense of inner security. This total absorption which is close to what younger children appear to experience during their play, is described in child-like delight by Helene.

Helene: ...it's really fun, every time I look forward to doing drama 'cause it's so fun...it is a change and it makes me feel better, it makes me feel like I want to feel, it makes me feel happy and it makes me feel like I know what my life's going to be when I grow up and when like what kind of work there is and stuff.

The structural aspects of the conception are actualized by this participation described so enthusiastically above: by being willing to be involved, by pretending, by exploring and by making choices.

In summary, this conception is likened to the play experience of young children; there is a sense of openness and freedom. There are choices and a feeling of total absorption in the involvement.

### Conception 6: Drama takes on a life of its own

This conception shares the elements of linking with Conception 2, Drama is a way of linking. In both conceptions drama is seen as being integrated with other activities that occur in the classroom. The difference here is the point of view: in Conception 2 the learning is bound to subject areas or to the personal connections which learners make. In this conception the major referential aspects are that children and the teacher are together in an experience which is an organic, unpredictable, and open-ended exploration. Subject areas lines are blurred even more than in Conception 3. The experience is trusted and honoured in its own right.

Investigator: So you can choose, you like that?

Jason: Yah.

Investigator: So what helps you do this?

Jason: I just go along with it. I just enjoy going along with it.

Investigator: What helps you? Usually people when they think of drama, they think of plays and skits in a book and you memorize the parts. But in this one...

Alice: This comes out naturally.

There is a less crisply defined purpose. From the students' point of view, there is a sense of trust in the richness of the experience. This is an open-ended, organic process; it is a road

travelled together by members of the group. To begin the drama there may be a chain-like process that starts with one person and continues to evolve.

> Investigator: ... tell me a little bit about how this drama is organized, like, how does it work?
>
> Carlos: Well, someone says something at first and then someone has to say something else that no one knows that somebody said, so you just say what you think would be a reasonable answer and then that person just says something on that until you just keep on going and then you've got a conversation started.
>
> Investigator: OK and who are these "someones"...
>
> Carlos: Well, anyone who happens to be in the drama.
>
> Investigator: Uh-huh..
>
> Carlos: Could be an actor or could be a class or could be people in other classes or could be (inaudible) could be just about anything.

Structurally there may be a need for quick thinking in response to surprises and unexpected events. Any kind of tension is a contrast to the tension felt in the previous conception in this grouping: Conception 4, Drama is something which one must take part in, where the tension of thinking that there was a specific way to respond produces discomfort. Here, there is a sense of trusting the process and a sense of allowing events to unfold naturally in whatever way they will.

> Investigator: Tell me how this drama works...
>
> Alice: Our teacher...starts getting us into it, and like John always gives a lot of thought to it, from his point and other people take his thoughts and translate it in their own way and other people take it from that and Mrs. A. pauses us for a while and she thinks of what her opinion is and she sometimes says "out of role" and she talks about it...she just talks us into it...I never knew that Carol and Marnie were going to do that, so I found that interesting Kitty had to make up all those decisions in no time, I don't think she knew that she had to do that...

Traditional methods of competing among students no longer apply in this conception: one cannot read ahead in a textbook, get advance views from an older sibling or prepare in any other way.

Carlos: I like taking on different characters, that's interesting. I also like it because like no one has an advantage, you can't study it really unless you and Mrs. A. but no one in the class can study it.

Since there is no expected outcome the structural evolution depends on participants thinking quickly and creating as they go along. In the end, the ownership is with the group of people involved. The implication is that the teacher is part of that group.

Carlos: Well, you don't know anything about it yet, you just think quick and just pick up ideas as you go along, so basically I'd say that you're making it up and nobody wrote it out and then you copy it and act it out. You're making it up as you go. So it's sort of like your film or whatever.

Investigator: Your film?

Carlos: Yah, not someone else writing out the lines and you read them, you're making the lines as you go along so it's nobody's film, it's just everybody's that made it, everyone that put into it.

This recognition of the fluidity of the process and of the resources of others gives a sense of a broadly based understanding of learning. The experience is not a undirectional act of responding to a strategy imposed from the outside, but rather a trusting of the direction of the teacher as well as of the experiences and ideas of one's peers. The group provides support for individuals.

Investigator: Can you identify what's going on in your mind while you're doing this, trying to be someone else?

Jason: Well, being part of the class, that's one reason why, going along with groups that are doing it, it's fun to do.

Students as participants are integral to producing the drama, it is their imagination and past knowledge that drive the experience. In participating fully they must be willing to use other people's ideas and be willing to risk going along with the experience. The challenge is to be involved and to weave one's own ideas with those of others.

Alice: Carlos does it really well, he has all these good ideas, I guess he reads books about castles, he has all these good ideas...

Investigator: ...how do you know if you're really in role and it's going really well?

Alice: I guess you just gotta concentrate on yourself and don't fool around and listen to the teacher and other people's thoughts like thinking and when it comes your turn

if you say maybe pick up some other people's ideas like maybe you have the same, pick up and it'll go pretty well.

Therefore, the structural aspect of this conception involves the students much more actively than previous conceptions. Students here are an integral part of the experience, they recognize that they have and are using their own personal resources as well as building on the ideas of others.

> Carlos: ...me and my friend Marcel, we have big imaginations, we've created lots of things in our heads and stuff...

Carlos continues in a later excerpt where he explains part of his personal resource as being his personal experience both in his family and in his recreation. He makes connections between theatre and drama and explains specifically how these can be useful to him in the classroom.

> Carlos: ...my Mum's in acting so I guess that helps a little bit and then I've been to a few plays and just watching movies and stuff gives you an idea of different types of characters and that gives you an idea of the different kinds of characters there is and who to choose and how they act and stuff and other than that there's just what you make up as you go along, when you're playing and stuff, it's all imaginary.

This is the only conception where there is clearly a sense of equality among the participants, teacher and students alike. It differs from the other conceptions on an axis of control and ownership: here there is a sense that at times the teacher is not necessarily totally in control and not necessarily the one who makes the final decisions. The distinct possibility of sharing the power is much stronger here than in the other conceptions save Conception 7 where discoveries inside the role can be made by any participant, teacher and student alike. Even the traditional lines of power between teacher and students are softened. Ideas for the experience can evolve from anyone. Having had practice over time (as most often the teacher does) may make the participant more adept at drama, but the overarching quality is an organic fluidity encompassing everyone.

> Carlos: ...everyone is equal, just, even you and Mrs. A. like you know how to do it really well so you might be better than some people that don't know how to think as quick, but still, everyone has ideas, so everyone can help put into it instead of just say Mrs. A. writing down notes on the board and we copy them down.

In summary, this conception could be viewed as an organic entity, taking shape through the input of the players. It is through trusting the process that one participates, enjoys and benefits from it.

**TABLE 3**

**GROUP C.  CHILDREN'S CONCEPTIONS OF A SPECIFIC AREA OF DRAMA**

**7.  ROLE TAKING IS LIKE DONNING A CLOAK**

**REFERENTIAL**

• metaxis

• guidance by teacher
    • modelling
    • setting boundaries
    • use of signals
    • encouragement

• commitment

• change in
  physical appearance

• emotional involvement

**STRUCTURAL**

• holding dual awarenesses

• following teacher's lead

• concentration
• liking drama

• behaving differently
• observing

• feeling empathy
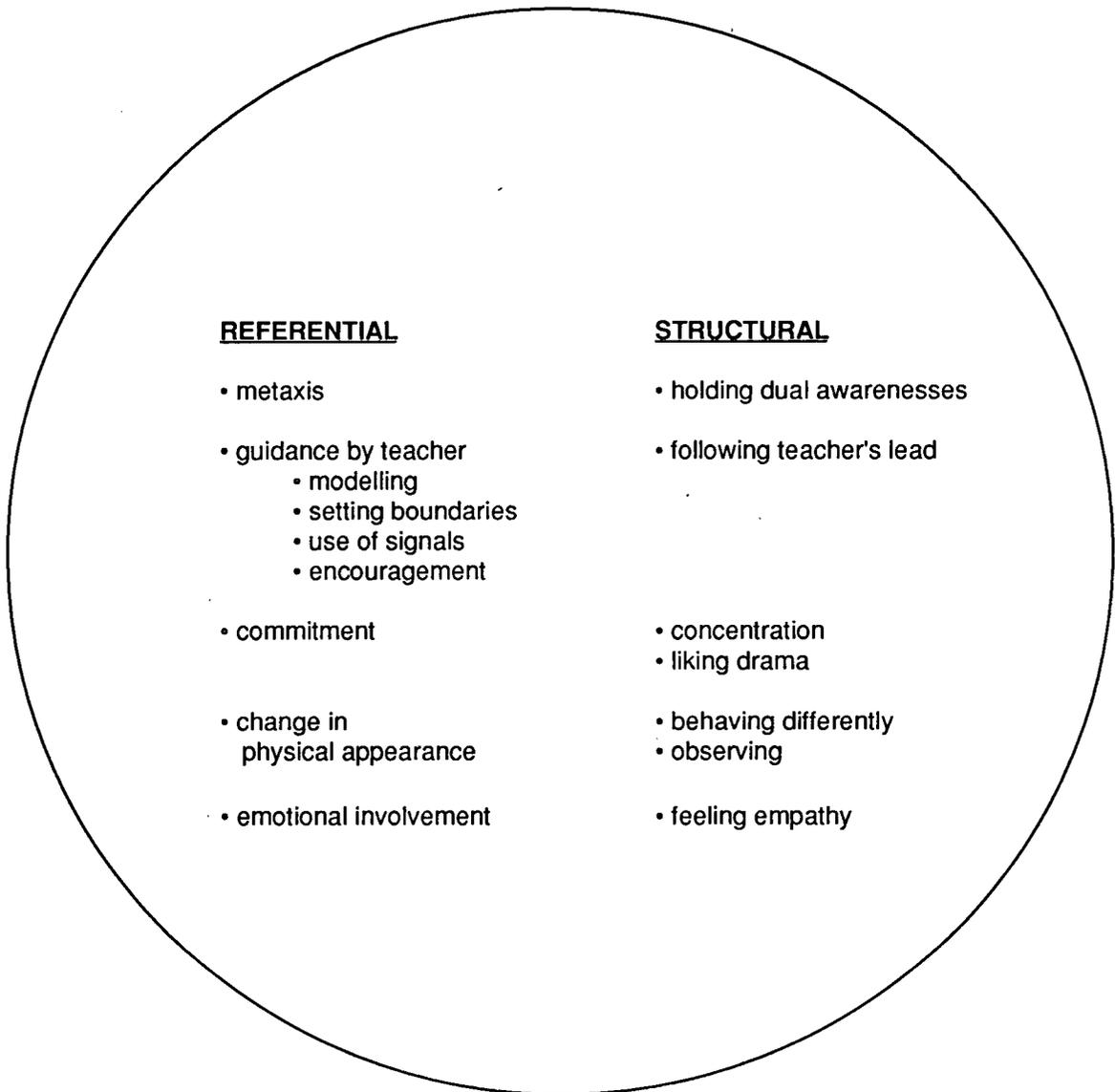
**GROUP C: CHILDREN'S CONCEPTIONS OF A SPECIFIC AREA OF DRAMA**

**Conception 7:   Role taking is like donning a cloak**

In this group, only one conception surfaced. It focusses on the central area of drama, role taking. This conception has been indirectly alluded to on various occasions throughout the other conceptions since it is by its very nature intricately related to all aspects of drama. It is separated here for the purpose of description. The identification of this conception is no doubt a result of this centrality to any dramatic activity as well as being a result of interview questions which directly addressed students' definitions of role and responses to being in role. Aspects of the conception surfaced in response to lead questions from the interviewer such as "How do you do this kind of drama?", "How can you tell if someone is really doing it well", and "How can you tell when your teacher is really in role?"

The most prominent referential aspect is embodied in the metaphor of the cloak which refers to the taking on of a role; the stepping into an arena from which other perspectives can be explored. The role is assumed without the loss of awareness of oneself. This dual awareness is called metaxis (Davis & Lawrence, 1986, O'Neill, 1989b). To extend the original metaphor: it refers to the wearer of the cloak being aware of the garment at the same time as being aware that the cloak is being worn. The participant in a drama views the dramatic process from the spectator's point of view and at the very same time is engaged in the drama.

> Keith:  Sometimes when I'm doing it I wonder how they really were and if this is the way they really acted if they did that sort of thing.
>
> Penny:  I would tell him that it's good for the kids cause it let's them sort of be their self but be someone else at the same time...
>
> Art:  You just pretend that you're yourself but you're as a different person...
>
> Jason:  ...they can be in the doctor's feet they can be like an adult, they can be a doctor then, they can act like a doctor when they are only a child...

From this insider's perspective, feelings and attitudes can be explored, and problems can be solved. Holding this conception allows students the possibility of exploring thinking that is not their own while being cognizant of their role as students. The referential aspects of this conception are closely related to the structural since the conception hinges on the fact that this is a process, an active, deliberate process. Four other referential aspects emerged: (a) guidance by the teacher, (b) commitment, (c) changes in physical appearance, and (d) emotional involvement.

Taking on a role and becoming someone different in a classroom means that the teacher prepares the students by providing activities that frame the experience of role taking.

> Marion: ...she gives us a bit of background on what the people were and like we were all different characters, we had to choose a character and a name, age, where they were going to live, what they looked like, and we had to think of the person's personality is like and try to be just like that person.

> Helene: We usually put our heads down and the teacher says stuff and we have to imagine it and then she says when you're ready you have to come in the circle and then we start acting.

Modelling is another way of providing guidance and serves to build confidence in students and show them that the class atmosphere supports risk taking.

> Investigator: How do you feel when other people are doing drama, like when you see other people in role and Mrs. A. in role, what's going on inside?

> Alice: Well, you know a long time ago when you and Mrs. A. did it and she was asking you how many dogs and things, that was pretty interesting because she kept on asking you questions and you kept on filling her in at the same time. So it was pretty neat watching other people doing it.

Guidance is also given in the sense that boundaries are evident for student behavior. There is an expectation that the work is to be respected and that students show commitment to the drama. When this commitment wanes, the teacher responds with consequences.

> Alice: ...if other people laugh you try not to laugh with them 'cause it will get the rest of the group laughing and then Mrs. A. will probably get mad and things.

Marion: If we're all goofing off and stuff, the teacher will stop us and say O.K. out of role and if we're doing really well she'll carry it on as long as we can.

Signals are given for the onset of specific role-taking times. Student participation and involvement takes the form of responding to directions as well as to creating, and imagining within suggested frameworks.

Art: The teacher puts us in role, she goes in role as a person, and then we just start having a conversation about things...

Art: ...she just says "in role" and "I am Sir Geoffrey" and then she's quiet for a couple of seconds and then she walks into the room and starts being Sir Geoffrey.

Jason: They keep on saying my name differently and that, so you're a different person right there.

Carlos: ...we usually wear our name tags...

The teacher also provides response and encouragement throughout the drama.

Anne: ...the teacher is very good at it, if somebody says an answer and it's not the best answer in the world, she doesn't get mad at you or anything...

Taking on a role demands a high degree of engagement and commitment on the part of participants. It means concentrating inwardly and making a concerted effort to focus.

Keith: ...I just try to clear my mind of it and just think.

Art: ...when you're a different person, you gotta change your whole image of whatever you were before, so it takes a lot of thinking and that kind of stuff... so we have to think of the person, what they would say, what they would do, actions, and then do them out when we're that person.

Art: ...you think a lot more when you're in role as a person...and when you're thinking you use your head of course, and if you think longer you probably get more of it out of your head than if you thought for like two seconds...

Jillian: ...you don't usually pay attention to anyone else. You're trying to get ideas yourself.

This commitment continues as effort must be made to remain in role.

Dave: Sometimes you sort of make up the setting you're in. You have to make sure you don't stop being the person.

This engagement is also affected by personal preference. Where drama is seen as something special and something enjoyable, it becomes easier to take part in and to understand.

Investigator: What definition would you give (to drama)?

Helene: Well, you have to act, you have to pretend that you are someone and you have to really like drama to be in drama because the things you like is more easier for you. For instance, people hate Math and they're bad at it, but some people love Math and they're really good at it. That's what I mean by being good and bad at it. It's a neat opportunity too, it's fun.

Investigator: It's a neat opportunity?

Helene: Yah.

Investigator: Can you say more about that?

Helene: Some people don't get the opportunity to do drama and we're lucky that we get drama...

There are visible physical changes that are part of taking on a role. In response to such questions as "How can you tell when other children are really in role?" and "What happens when your teacher is in role?" specific things were identified. Seen from this conception, being in role means behaving differently to the degree that there are physical changes obvious to those around.

Investigator: ...would there be any ways I could tell that she's in role?

Art: Well, she would probably talk in a deeper voice than when she normally talks so you could hear her.

Investigator: Anything other than the voice?

Art: The way she talks to people, that's a lot different.

Investigator: How's it different?

Art: Well, she's not being herself kind of.

Investigator: ...are there any actions that are different?

Art: Oh, she walks kind of, walks weird.

Investigator: Walks weird, tell me about that.

Art: She walks really tight like when she walks she's stiff, kind of.

Investigator: Stiff?

Art: Yah, not like moving her legs but she can still walk when she's stiff, like tense.

Changes include general demeanor, facial colour, manner of speaking, and eye contact. Many

of these aspects are learned by observing the teacher as is evidenced above and extended by

Jason and Penny in excerpts below.

> Jason: She's really serious, like when we have to do something her face got all red and she started getting really energy... like really hyped up, ....she was really in role then.

> Penny: ...usually she's a male and she sort of changes her whole personality... when we're doing just Math or something, she'll talk normally and when we're doing this squire and stuff she comes and she turns into something totally different ... the way that she sort of acts and the ways that she talks she sort of she makes her voice sort of like a male's voice...she's not really just comfortable, she's like standing up straight and walking around and eyeing every person.

Body language and behavior can be interpreted to mean that there is a high degree of

involvement.

> Marion: You can tell when people are in role when they're really thinking about what they're doing, they're not just going around joking off, running around the class, or something, they're really being serious about it and if they look at you when they're speaking and they talk like they're more grown up they don't talk like a little child.

> Carlos: ...if you put your mind to it you can do it well...

> Investigator: How can you tell if they are doing it really well?

> Carlos: If they slack off and they're just sittin' back and people are making props like cigarettes and stuff, they're just like this and sittin' back and you can tell that they're not really trying but if you sit up straight and you look like you're trying to think and stuff rather than just talking to your neighbor and stuff.

Role taking has a similar quality of public performance to that aspect in Conception

4, Drama is something which one must take part in, although in this conception it seems that

this is an accepted part of role taking. Exposure, although not always comfortable, is less

frightening in that support can be taken from the fact that peers are in the same position.

> Jason: I sort of like acting a little, but if it's like a whole bunch of people I feel more comfortable than if it's just me acting I feel like embarrassed or something...'cause if I act with someone else then I won't be so embarrassed just by myself.

Taking on a role means identifying with characters, past, present or future, and taking on the appropriate feelings. The emotional involvement is important. The challenge is to have empathy with the feelings of characters being created.

> Jean: ...it's how you feel about them, it's like that when you act you put yourself in their place and then you try and feel how they're feeling...

This is the taking on of "the personalities of others to bring them to life for the listener and ...(adding) our own commentary on them through the way we represent them" (Robinson, 1980, p. 151). This insider's perspective can serve as the very purpose for taking on the role because it is through the engagement of the affective domain that the learning becomes powerful. Identifying with characters is seen as as important aspect of understanding contexts that could otherwise be understood only at a surface level. The imaginary is brought into the present by this identification of the feelings. This description of the importance of feelings extends the structural aspect of Conception 1, Drama is a tool, where the identification was seen to support learning in other subjects.

> Jean: ...it'll help us feel like what other people used to feel in those days ...

> Marion: ...we're feeling what it was like then, if you just read it in a book it doesn't seem real but when you're actually acting it out and acting like you were living in those times you feel more like, like it feels more real, that it actually happened, that time.

> Keith: I think you probably learn more after acting out the part you might know how they feel and stuff and they way they acted...

> Keith: ...it's probably a better way to learn than just reading a book 'cause it's different things, other people's how they would feel back then and how they would act more from the feelings and when you act then you know how to act more like that, reading a book you just know how they act, well you do read the book anyway before the drama begins but if you just stop when just reading the book it's no fun you don't learn it as much 'cause once you get the feelings you know how then (to) act more.

In summary, this conception refers to taking on a role within a drama in the classroom. There are concrete steps which are taken and visible changes that occur with the participants. Emotional engagement is a major part of role taking and results in powerful learning experiences.

## SUMMATION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter the detailed analysis of the data was presented. The complete outcome space was outlined; the seven conceptions, the referential and structural aspects of each, and their relationships to each other. In addition to considerations related specifically to each of the conceptions, the analysis of the data allows for an examination of a number of general aspects of children's views of drama and of their participation and learning within the dramatic process. From the results the following general observations were made:

1. Children in one class hold a variety of conceptions of drama in education. These conceptions are underlying and are no doubt unknown to the children in the way that they are described in this study. They are evidenced by the language children use, the things that they say about their experience of drama, and presumably by other behaviors not tracked by this study. What is of interest here is that within one group of children there exists a range of views and interpretations of drama. Children make meaning in a variety of ways including viewing activities both from the perspective of how they may have been designed, by the teacher as well as how they are experienced. These two views are interrelated and overlap. For example, a child may hold the complementary views that from the teacher's point of view drama is a novel way of teaching and an interesting change and from within the experience it may be viewed as play. Other conceptions may be less complementary, even contradictory, but can be held by a child at the same time.

2. These conceptions act as filters (Stalker, 1989) thereby influencing the participation and learning of the children. It was not the purpose of the study to identify individual children as holding certain conceptions, rather to surface and describe the conceptions. It follows that in identifying the conceptions, the accompanying effects on participation and learning will become evident. From the results of the data some assumptions can be made regarding the nature of participation in drama that would accompany some of the conceptions. For example, the conception, Drama is a tool, might

well be accompanied by participation that would cause children to be much more product oriented than several other conceptions such as, Drama is a novel way of teaching, Drama is play, or Drama takes on a life of its own. The latter conceptions may well be evidenced in attitudes and behaviors that are more open and trusting.

Children hold conceptions about other areas of learning, about schooling, and about life. This raises questions such as: Would these overlap with those identified here? Would some of them the same? In other words, would the child who holds predominantly the view that Drama is something one must take part in, see school and learning, as something to dutifully participate in? Is this a life view? For example, would a conception such as Drama is a way of linking, be most likely held by children who make connections in other areas of life? Although one could also consider home and cultural influence on the formation of these conceptions, for the purposes of this study it is sufficient to note that a variety of ways of viewing exist among children and that these views have an effect on their involvement in learning.

3. Learning is a change process and can involve a shift in conceptions. Marton and Ramsden define learning as being a qualitative change in how a person sees, experiences, understands or conceptualizes something, as opposed to a quantitative change in the knowledge base (1988, p. 217). The conceptions in this study are not seen to be related in a hierarchical manner, nor can it be said that there is a developmental sequence in how drama is experienced. However, children made many references to how drama enables them to understand events in historical or imaginary situations. Drama in education is seen as an agent in effecting change; presumably in the conceptions held of drama or in conceptions held of other areas.

4. There are many benefits arising from doing drama according to the data. Children frequently connected drama to content area work which was integrated with drama and to social and emotional areas. Drama offers an arena for social interaction with others, for

learning how to depend on others and how to help others. It allows children to see each other in new and sometimes surprising ways. For most, it also provides a safe place to take risks such as speaking in front of others and being vulnerable and exposed in front of peers.

5. Children have strong affective responses to drama. Throughout the descriptions of the conceptions affective elements were evident, particularly in descriptions linked with conceptions such as Drama is play and Role taking is like donning a cloak. A common response found throughout the interviews was that it was "fun". From an organizational point of view, children appreciated that drama was a change and was unusual. They appreciated having choices, being able to create and imagine, and they appreciated the element of surprise. For a small number of children the emotional response was negative, most often due to the tension surrounding exposure in front of peers. Even these children felt that although the feelings were not always positive that they could learn and benefit from the experience. The sense was that it was "good for them" rather than being a waste of their time.

6. Children appreciate a teacher who takes risks and who participates in exploration. A recurring underlying theme throughout the interviews was a respect for the teacher and for the work. Children noticed that the teacher was willing to try things that were unusual and was willing at appropriate times to be an equal participant in the drama activities. She was willing to restructure classroom activities and to go into role herself. Several children described how odd or "weird" she appeared in role and how uncomfortable this felt for them at first. Yet they respected her for continuing and in so doing, a trust in the process developed. There was a sense that doing drama was unusual and that it required on the teacher's part not only a special body of knowledge but also skill, imagination, and commitment.

7. Children recognize the value of creativity, of play and of organically evolving activities. Throughout the data references were made to the engagement which children felt

while using their imaginations and when having freedom to explore. Children at this age do not play in the same manner as do their younger counterparts, but clearly they can be very involved in purposeful activities that provide a high degree of personal engagement, a sense of freedom and include elements of choice.

In summary, these observations have considered some of the general observations concerning the results of the data. In the final chapter the study as a whole is reviewed and conclusions, implications, and recommendations are considered.

## 6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### SUMMARY

This has been a study of the reflections of children, ages nine to eleven, on their understanding of drama. In the process of investigating their views, the following procedure was followed: data was collected through semi-structured interviews, the data was transcribed and analyzed according to the phenomenographic tradition, and the outcome space was presented in the form of conceptions including detailed description of aspects of each conception and their relationships to each other. From these results the following general observations regarding the conceptions were made:

1. children in one class hold a variety of conceptions;

2. conceptions vary widely;

3. conceptions are related to each other;

4. individual children may hold several conceptions, even ones that are apparently contradictory in nature.

### CONCLUSIONS

This study has allowed children's meaning making to be at the center of the investigation. This, in and of itself, has value for the educator. It provides an inside perspective of the learning process and thereby enables educators to more fully understand the process and to consider what decisions are needed to adjust it. The world of the child has long been seen as a source of valuable information which can guide and inform educational practice. This knowledge has caused writers and researchers to consider ways of viewing learners and involving them more directly and openly in their learning process (Calkins,1983; Donaldson, 1978; Egan, 1986; Wells, 1986; Wilkinson, Barsley, Hanna & Swan, 1980). In the words of Ference Marton

"If we understand the relationship that exists between an individual and what he or she is trying to learn, our pedagogical opportunities are greatly expanded." (1986, p. 43-44)

This call for understanding the learning process and for focussing on learners as individuals has a broad history. Writers such as Michael Fullan (1982), John Goodlad (1984), and Carl Glickman (1985), have strongly voiced concern over school systems that do not meet the needs of individuals. Others have designed ways of restructuring activities within the classroom to involve students much more directly in intellectually rigorous ways and inviting them into metacognitive activities (Bellanca & Fogarty, 1990; Costa, 1985; Johnson & Johnson, 1984; Joyce & Weil, 1972).

This same view is reflected in documents that are now guiding major changes in the educational system in British Columbia. The Year 2000 document (Province of British Columbia, 1990a) states as part of its mission statement that the purpose of the school system is to "enable learners to develop their individual potential" (p. 3). This can only be done by understanding learners, their viewpoints and their needs. The new Primary Program is child-centered in both its instructional and evaluative approach. The Intermediate document, while still in draft form at this time, encourages a learner-centered curriculum. Throughout both documents the place of learners, their personal resources, their needs, and their views are in a central place. There are numerous specific references to the importance of seeing children as participants in their education and of inviting children to reflect on their learning processes. Thus, this study also has a philosophical and contextual base within the provincial scene.

In summary, understanding that children's views differ and realizing some of these differences have value. The following are further conclusions that continue this discussion; conclusions regarding the importance of reflection, and conclusions that are drawn regarding the nature and power of drama in education. Finally, implications and recommendations that can be drawn from these three areas are considered.

It is evident that the process of reflection is a complex and engaging one. Being engaged in reflection assumes a belief about its value and a set of skills in active listening, and questioning. It also requires respect and trust on the part of all participants. Children's reflections are a valuable source of information for researchers, educators and for the children themselves. This investigation into reflection supports this view in that the results are rich and detailed. With respect to reflection, the following conclusions can be drawn from the content of this study.

1. Most children enjoy reflecting on their learning process. They appreciate being listened to and appreciate being trusted that they are making sense.

2. Children have many, and varied insights.

3. The process of making meaning is a very personal one.

Children's insights support the claims of educators regarding the power of drama in education. Some conclusions were formed after reviewing the summary of claims made by educators about drama in education as stated in Chapter 2 in light of the views of the children in this study. This is noteworthy in that the claims are made from the educators' points of view whereas the data are from the children's point of view. In other words the participants in the educational activity support the anticipated results as evidenced in the conclusions below.

1. Drama is a purposeful, useful activity. Children described drama as something that helped them in a variety of ways. They saw drama as an important part of their learning. It was not a recreational break nor a mysterious event, rather it was an integral part of a sound educational program.

2. Drama helps the learning process in many different ways. Children saw drama assisting their learning by (a) assisting them in comprehending and remembering factual information, (b) allowing them an opportunity to personalize points of view and to explore these viewpoints and (c) integrating learning both with previous knowledge and with their

personal lives. Drama was also seen to enhance learning by providing variety, surprise and enjoyment.

3. Drama engages the affective domain. While the focus in educational practices in the past has been primarily on the intellectual domain, the educational community is now moving towards a recognition of the importance of the emotional realm in the learning process. Both the new Primary Program and the Intermediate Draft document in British Columbia (Province of British Columbia, 1990b, 1990c) state one of the five major goal areas as being emotional development. In this study the importance of feeling was frequently referred to by the children. Participants talked about the affective domain in a variety of ways. They talked about their own emotional involvement which for most was positive. They talked about their feelings and thoughts while observing others and they identified the importance of empathizing with characters whose roles they would be assuming. It was clear to them that a crucial part of taking a role is the affective domain and that the comprehension of any situation could be enriched by empathy. The evidence in this study thus points to the fact that drama offers a strategy where the emotional energy can be harnessed and explored.

4. Related to the importance of the affective domain is the nature of drama as a social activity. Movements such as cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1984) are being adopted in many school districts and provide guidance for structuring collaborative group work. An important aspect of this work which links to the previous conclusion is being aware of feelings of others and managing conflict constructively. Drama involves participants in collaborative activities and allows learning to happen with other people. One of the principles of learning according to Year 2000 document (Province of British Columbia, 1990a) is that learning is both individual and social. The importance of talking together, sharing ideas and learning from others is evidenced by the results of this study.

5. Drama engages the imagination. Participants are able to use their imagination in ways that are sometimes not encouraged in other subject areas. Creativity is nurtured in drama in that children are able to play in the metaphoric world and to make their explorations concrete by thinking, talking and writing in role. Eisner (1991) has said the environment in classroom should evoke children's sense of wonder and inspire them to be let their imaginations soar. This exploration of ideas, as evidenced in this study, is purposeful, engaging and often quite challenging. In the words of Eisner, "What really counts in schools is teaching children that the exploration of ideas is sometimes difficult, often exciting, and occasionally fun" (p.11).

6. Drama can be a powerful force in an integrated unit of study. Because of its very nature the activity in a drama allows children to use knowledge and explore different points of view. Children described with great ease how the various subject areas complemented and supported each other. For example, a knowledge driven unit in Social Studies or Science, can come alive through the role taking in drama. This leads directly to the next conclusion.

7. Drama allows children to personalize knowledge. Children are able to experiment with attitudes not necessarily their own and through role taking are able to explore aspects of these stances.

8. Drama is close to play. There is an intense absorption that takes place in young children's play. This same quality of "being at one with an experience" was described by the children in this study.

## IMPLICATIONS

The most overwhelming implication follows from the support that this study brings to the place of drama in education. The children's voices in this study are very clear: drama is a worthwhile, and very engaging activity. It is a teaching tool that is purposeful and rigorous. The active nature of drama means that participants will have direct experiences

with concepts, issues and ideas. Learning becomes personalized and more powerful. The children in this study made many references to the active nature of drama, to the intense involvement which they felt and to the theatrical elements of tension and surprise. The Intermediate Program Draft (Province of British Columbia, 1990a) has a clear position statement on the importance of active learning as it contributes to a learner-focussed program. In part it states that active learners

> ... are involved in directing their own learning by sharing in the formation of purpose, the initiation of plans, the selections of activities, and the evaluations of achievement. Active learning provides the connection between the world of the learner and the world he or she seeks to explore. (p. 24)

Through drama, teachers can structure this kind of involvement for students and, given the results of this study, students are able to recognize this and be fully engaged. The major implication is that the educational experience of students can be enriched by the use of drama in education. While drama is described in the recent documents from the B.C. Ministry of Education (Province of British Columbia, 1990a, 1990b) it remains questionable how much drama and what kind of drama is actually being taught in the majority of classrooms in the province.

The very nature of this study supports a second major implication: that reflection is a valuable activity and can provide a rich source of information for children's constructs of reality. Reflecting orally and in written form is becoming more of a normative practice as teachers experiment with a variety of journal and learning logs activities. Teachers need support in moving towards embracing reflection as a norm and in providing environments in their classrooms that are conducive to metacognitive thinking.

Integrating subject areas is valuable. Content areas can support each other and approaches taken through one medium can enrich the knowledge and skills in another. The whole language approach to language education in many British Columbia schools moves from experience of language in a variety of content contexts to the examination of focus areas.

This approach encourages viewing learning much more as a fluid process than as a series of a compartimentalized steps. It is an approach that reframes the nature of knowledge and questions the view that learning can be fragmented (Perkins, 1986). The focus of educational practice should be to enable learners to "make connections and transform new knowledge into personal understanding" (Province of British Columbia, 1990a, p. 89). It is also an approach that serves students in preparation for the world beyond the classroom. In the words of Heidi Hayes Jacobs, the renewed trend "... in the schools toward interdisciplinarity will help students better integrate strategies from their studies into the larger world." (1989, p. 6). This process of linking and connecting is supported by the results of this study.

Learning is social. It is dynamic and involves listening to others, sharing thinking and learning from others. Educational movements valuing collaborative learning in all areas have assisted many teachers in structuring the social aspect of learning while providing challenging approaches to learning (Bellanca & Fogarty, 1990; Graves, 1983; Holdaway, 1979; Johnson & Johnson 1984, 1989). Drama encourages social interaction. It creates situations where meaningful dialogue takes places and where decisions need to be made. Children in this study were well aware of this dimension of drama, they described collaborative creation and they reflected on their own actions and thoughts as well as on the actions and explanations of others. Drama supports teachers in finding ways to structure social aspects of learning into constructive learning opportunities. Role taking provides such an alternative.

Allowing for the engagement of the emotional realm means that children will feel empowered to recognize and verbalize feelings. If educators are to address this area of learning and life, it cannot be left to separately structured activities but must be part of meaningful classroom experiences. Encouraging children to be fully engaged and then reflecting on these experiences allows them the protection needed for emotional engagement.

Play is an important developmental stage in learning. While it is given consideration at the earlier ages, it is frequently not recognized that nine to eleven year old children also require exploratory time. The findings in this study indicate that freedom within structures can provides children the opportunity to explore randomly, to try on attitudes and explore viewpoints not necessarily their own.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Several possible areas for further research are suggested by this investigation. Drama is a powerful teaching strategy and the conceptions which became the results of the study point to a variety of areas that merit further study.

Because dialogue is central to drama, a study focussing on the talk between teachers and students would be of interest. This study focussed on the content of students' reflections. It would be of interest to analyze what occurs in the oral interactions within the drama. Studies in the past have focussed on language learning (National Association for Drama in Education,1984) or on the effects of teacher questioning (Chizik, 1985). An analysis of what children say and how they make meaning during the dramatic process would complement this research study.

While this study has focussed on the conceptions of drama of children ages nine to eleven years, it would add to a broader view of this question to study the views of children at a different age. For example, investigating the views of students at a high school level where specialist teachers are involved could provide interesting comparative results.

A study of children's conceptions of other curricular areas or of learning in general could provide interesting data for comparison to the conceptions as described in this study.

In the phenomenographical tradition a variety of studies have been undertaken on the nature of learning (Beaty, et al., in press; Johansson, et al., 1985; Marton & Saljo, 1984; Pratt, 1990). Most of these studies were longtitudinal in nature. A longtitudinal study

which investigates children's views of drama over time would present further insight into understandings of the dramatic process and would offer a view of the change over time.

The importance of the engagement of feelings was evident in the study. Several questions arise from this. Is there transfer of the emotional involvement to other subject areas? Do the positive attitudes generated during drama influence attitudes towards school and towards life? Are children's self-confidence and self-concept influenced by drama? How can teachers support children who do not enjoy drama? Although this study only surfaced a few comments which were less than positive about the involvement in drama, it behoves us as educators to understand the needs and feelings of all children and to design situations where growth can occur for each individual.

Several links were surfaced in the study that could be explored further: one being the link between drama and play. This raises the questions of the nature of play and what aspects are similar to the nature of drama. How these two are connected and intertwined has been reviewed by Verriour (1989) and would make a useful study in light of some of the references made throughout this study. A similar second link which arose is the link between theatre and play. Children love to act and love to perform. Examining aspects of these links from the viewpoint of children would complement the work of this investigation.

Drama has been a part of the elementary educational documents, first as a part of the Language Arts area (Province of British Columbia, 1978, 1981), then as a part of the Fine Arts (Province of British Columbia, 1985). The question that surfaces is one of implementation: to what degree is drama implemented in the elementary schools in British Columbia? What kind of drama is being done? What kind of support do educators need to further provide this experience for their students?

Finally, this study has been a "kidasking" study using the phenomenographical method. It has been fully detailed in the hopes that it would not only provide a rich and understandable description, but as such would contribute to the field at large. Any area of

investigation lends itself to research from the participants' points of view. As the field of education moves into the area of seeing learning more as a shared mission and as learners are taking a greater part of the responsibility for their process, researchers also need to be prepared to take on the task of investigating educational phenomena from the insiders' point of view.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Investigating the views of children on the dramatic process permitted many positive outcomes. The children in this study had the opportunity to be engaged in a lengthy one-to-one conversation with an adult who was interested in understanding their process. This was reported by their teacher to be a positive experience for the students.

As the investigator who did not teach the children, I personally appreciated the wealth of insights offered to me. It became painfully apparent how this kind of time and opportunity is a luxury in the daily pace of the classroom.

The phenomenographical tradition has been a valuable research method in that it has allowed the children's voice to remain in the center of this study. It provided a framework for analysis that allowed for rich understanding of the data beyond the surface meanings.

The insights that the children brought to this study regarding drama in education re-affirmed the power of this teaching medium. While their enthusiasm is no doubt a credit to a very skillful teacher, it offers to the field of education more inspiring evidence of the power of drama as a teaching strategy.

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# APPENDIX A:  INTERVIEW WITH JASON

This study is centered on the voice of the children and their views of drama in education.  To add to the description of the results this sample interview has been included. It has been transcribed directly from the tape-recording, punctuated for readability with only minor changes such as omissions or repetitious phrases by the investigator.

Investigator:  Maybe we could begin start by reviewing what you've been doing in drama.  What is this drama all about?

Jason:  We're going into the future 100 years, 2089, and we've made portraits of ourselves in the future. We've made futuristic items like all along the wall. We've written if we have families or anything like that and we're trying to create different items, trying to live underground and above ground too, and we have cars that fly and go under water and we have all different items like that.

Investigator:  So being somebody else and being in another setting seems to be what this kind of drama is about.  So how do you imagine that you are somebody else in a drama like this?

Jason:  I don't know, if I have to speak or something, I try to act serious, but I like doing drama, it's enjoyable, you get to be another person so that's fun to me.

Investigator:  Can you tell me why you like that?

Jason:  Well, you don't have to be yourself all the time, you can act like an adult or male or female, doesn't matter, don't have to worry about, you can make up your own personalities and all that.

Investigator:  So you can choose.  You like that?

Jason:  Yah.

Investigator:  So what helps you to do this?

Jason:  I just go along with it.  I just enjoy going along with it.

Investigator:  That sounds like its a personal attitude on your part "I'll just go along", is there anything else that helps you?

Jason:  I sort of like acting a little, but if it's like a whole bunch of people I feel more comfortable than if it's just me acting I feel like embarrassed or something.

Investigator:  So how is it that other people around you help with that?

Jason:  Well, like when some people play music they have other people playing with them, you can't act unless you have, I can't act, it's sort of embarrassing for me to

act by myself, 'cause if I act with someone else then I won't be so embarrassed just by myself.

Investigator: Are there things that they do or that they say that help you imagine or pretend that you are someone else?

Jason: Well, they keep on saying my name differently and that, so you're a different person right there.

Investigator: So saying the name helps you. Can you identify what's going on in your mind while you're doing this, trying to be someone else?

Jason: Well, being part of the class that's one reason why, going along with groups that are doing it, it's fun to do.

Investigator: You've said a lot that it's fun to do. What parts of it are hard?

Jason: You have to, some people act like not like really serious and when you have to be serious and you look at them and something and then they make you laugh and it's hard to keep not laughing from stopping yourself from laughing and giggling.

Investigator: So when they distract, it's hard. Are there any parts of this that you don't like?

Jason: No, I enjoy it. I like it all.

Investigator: Are there some things that other people might not like?

Jason: I don't know. Some people might not like closing their eyes for such a long time. Some parts might be so boring for them.

Investigator: The visualization you think some kids might not like. You know you're saying that you're pretending and you're imagining and the whole class is doing this. Can you tell if some people are in role really well?

Jason: Like if they have like a serious attitude. and that, then you can tell they're really into it, but if they're like going like this and they're moving their hands like this and they're fooling around you can tell that they don't really pay attention to acting or to doing drama.

Investigator: So sometimes it's the way that they move?

Jason: Yah.

Investigator: What about Mrs. A., can you tell when she's in role?

Jason: She's really serious, like when we have to do something her face got all red and she started getting really energ... like really hyped up, like "tell your feelings now", she was really in role then.

Investigator: So you can tell just by her physical way that she is, and even the color in her face, you're saying. How do you feel when that happens, when you see her really in role?

Jason: I don't know. It's neat, sort of neat watching her when she was really hyped up and that, acting and that, sometimes she looks at you funny sometimes, she looks at you like this.

Investigator: How does that make you feel?

Jason: Once in a while I feel funny, see her staring at people, then when people ask me questions and that I don't know the answer, I feel embarrassed in drama. If you haven't been studying who you are and that, what's your son's name, like, you have to think sometimes and I look at the facts before I go in so I'm pretty, I'm fine with that.

Investigator: When Mrs. A. looks like that and when other kids look at you funny, is that one of the things that's maybe a little bit hard about drama?

Jason: Yah, 'cause they make you laugh, you can't concentrate very good then.

Investigator: Jason, can you tell me if there's anything you learn from this drama? Anything you can use, say, in the rest of your life? Is there anything you're learning from it?

Jason: It's like studying the future, sort of.

Investigator: Uh-huh

Jason: It's like drama but you study, it's like studying the future, you can, like you can think back when you were doing drama and what they expected might be and you like at the future now and what's happening now and whenever comparisoning you find out what was sort of comparison to that .

Investigator: So you said that one of the things that you liked about it was that you were studying the future, now I'm going to ask you a little bit of a hard question. Somebody might say to you yes, but you can study the future in different ways, you don't have to pretend you're somebody, you don't have to do drama to do that. So what would you say to someone like that?

Jason: Well then it's sort of like you can feel like what you would be when you're an adult. Once you're it what matters would be, future like if there really was an earthquake and you had to go underground and they had problems like White Rock would be like a drama.

Investigator: But what's the point of doing drama with it? Or is there? Let me put it another way, O.K.? You want a bit of help here? Say that you went home and you told your parents what you did today and your parents said for goodness sakes, you mean you weren't studying from books and weren't watching good videos on the T.V., you mean you just sat around and pretended you were adults.

Jason: Well, my parents did drama too so they understand, sort of, and they like it themselves a lot

Investigator: Uh-huh, so they think it's good.

Jason: Yah.

Investigator: So what do they think is good about it? Because a neighbor would come over and say, you mean that's what Jason is doing these days? What is happening in those schools? What might you or your parents so to that?

Jason: Well, it's sort of like educational if you want to be an actor or study, or want to act like in the past or the future or different people. It would be good to learn drama.

Investigator: So, let's pretend that someone is going to be really tough and say yah, but I don't want my child to be an actor, my child is going to be a doctor, why are you doing drama?

Jason: Well if we do, they can be in the doctor's feet they can be like an adult, they can be a doctor then, they can act like a doctor when they are only a child, when they are only kids still.

Investigator: So people can maybe imagine themselves as what they might want to be when they are an adult? What's good about that, or is there anything good about that?

Jason: Well, you might not want to be that then, you might want to change your mind after.

Investigator: Oh, I see, O.K. So, I think that's covered my questions, maybe just one last question then. So if someone who didn't know this kind of drama said, you know that thing you were doing this morning with Mrs. A.? What were you doing? What's all that drama about? How would you explain it?

Jason: Well, drama 's like being another person, it's like acting but you do, you make pictures of being in the future, or in the past or whatever you want and you can be an adult, female, male, anything you want. You can be an animal probably, it's sort of like acting a bit. You can be anything you want. You can make stuff to go along, make settings, make pictures of yourself, and the future or the past, what you think you'd probably look like then.

Investigator: I've asked you a lot of questions. Is there anything you want to say about the drama or ask me?

Jason: We don't do it that much, we just started, so, not much to say right now, probably later in the year. We have just started acting like.