Chapter 11
Lighting the Fires Within:

Pre-service Teachers Learning in and through Drama

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Abstract Drama has been a key mode of learning and meaning making throughout recorded history; however, drama's role in teacher education is peripheral at best. Both teacher educators and pre-service teachers, because they often lack drama experience themselves, become fearful of extending themselves through such activities as creative dramatics or process drama in their classrooms. Yet creative drama is an ideal medium for developing literacy, particularly within a multi literacies paradigm. With simple, structured and progressive creative drama techniques, teacher educators can encourage pre-service teachers to become aware of the aesthetic and multi literacy benefits of drama use in their classrooms. A sample unit designed for the teacher education classroom is included.

Keywords drama, theater, theatre, creative drama, process drama, pre-service teachers, teacher education, literacy, multi literacies

> Humans are not vessels to be filled, but fires to be kindled, (unknown, as cited in Cecil & Lauritzen 1994, p.xiii).

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M. J. Narey (ed.), *Making Meaning*.

Introduction

A three-year-old recently asked his mother to play ponies with him. "I'll be the baby pony," he exclaimed, "and you be the momma pony. Now, let's get some food." The pair went on to enact growing crops on a farm, harvesting, and eating the food. The boy decided they needed some fish and searched the house for an appropriate fishing pole and bait. Armed with pole (shoe string) and bait (small, green block), mother and son fished on the stairway, bringing in a great catch before running away to hide from a giant, who was surely going to overcome them at any moment.

Young children enact make believe scenarios like this one thousands of times each day across the globe. Throughout recorded history, human beings have always used drama. Whether through informal techniques like this child's sociodramatic play or formal theater like the ancient Greeks, drama provides a way to perceive, study, and understand our lives and the world in which we live. In the previously mentioned play scenario, the young child explored roles of leadership, nurturing, and family relationships. He tried out his knowledge of how food is grown and secured and he did all of this while practicing verbal skills, making use of symbols (the fishing pole and bait), and composing his own story. This child was engaging in a literacy-rich activity, making meaning (Kress, 1997) through his dramatic expression. We understand literacy to be the ability to create and interpret symbolic, abstract ideas and texts, using multimodal approaches. This is a literacy that moves beyond communication through reading, writing, speaking and listening to include visual images and the senses of taste, touch, and feeling through which we understand the world. It is through multiple modes of exploration and expression that children develop literacy (Kress, 1997), both in the traditional sense of reading and writing, and in the expansive sense of communicating with others and making sense of life. Young children's dramatic expression encourages literacy while developing creativity and imagination.

Imagination is not only a hallmark of childhood, it is a foundation of learning and teaching. Maxine Greene (1995) champions imagination as an essential component of pre-service teacher preparation programs.

> … It is difficult for me to teach educational history or philosophy to teachers-to-be without engaging them in the domain of imagination and metaphor. How else are they to make meaning out of the discrepant things they learn? How else are they to see themselves as practitioners, working to choose, working to teach in an often indecipherable world? (p. 99)

But all too often pre-service teachers find their senses of imagination and creativity stifled by their formal educational experiences. Classroom applications of drama are one remedy to this situation.

This chapter is in two parts. Part 1 provides essential background for using drama as a pedagogical approach and focuses theoretical foundations and perspectives for the use of drama in teacher education. Part 2 describes a drama unit ap-

propriate for a pre-service teacher education classroom. Linkages between the theories and perspectives outlined in Part 1 is included. In addition, the unit described in Part 2 may be adapted for the early childhood classroom. Finally, we outline the literacies developed through the drama unit.

Part 1

What is Drama?

Pre-service teachers and other adults engage in drama all the time, without calling it such. We participate in and observe drama presentations every day of our lives (Goffman, 1959). The formal ones are those we experience through the media: television, cinema, live theater and the like. The informal ones are those in our daily life at home, school or other locations. When we rehearse in our mind how we will ask our boss for a promotion or imitate a colleague telling a funny story, we are engaging in drama. The young child pretending to be a mommy feeding her baby or a bus driver taking the zoo animals on a wild ride to the park is using drama. A parent making silly faces at his infant is employing drama. Yet how does this drama differ from an actor in a stage production?

There are numerous definitions of drama and theater and most are helpful in understanding the art form within particular contexts. David Booth (2003) links theater and drama closely:

> The field of Theater encompasses such variety: children playing in a sand box, students in the school musical, young people who have entered a university drama program, students exploring a script in the classroom…Drama is an ubiquitous force in our present world, an everyday and everywhere occurrence, as evidenced by the dramatic performances we view and listen to….Drama has become our principal means of expressing and interpreting the world as we explore and communicate ideas and information, social behaviors, values, feelings, and attitudes… (p. 18)

Many artists and non-artists use the terms drama and theater interchangeably but the distinction between the two is important for understanding drama's role and its potential as a pedagogical approach for learning and teaching. Wagner (1999/1976), in discussing the drama in education approach of Dorothy Heathcote, one of the early pioneers in the field, describes it as follows:

> The goal is to learn through drama—for example, to…see what other walks of life feel like. Drama in education enables participants, either during the drama itself or after the drama in a discussion, to look at reality through fantasy, to see below the surface of actions to their meaning. (p. 1)

Drama is also described as a social activity that helps participants explore issues from diverse perspectives. (Norris, McCammon, & Miller, 2000). Eric Bentley (1964) takes this further:

> Events are not dramatic in themselves. Drama requires the eye of the beholder to see drama in something, that is both to perceive elements of conflict and to respond emotionally to these elements of conflict. This emotional response consists in being thrilled, in being struck with wonder at the conflict. Even conflict is not dramatic in itself. Should we all perish in a nuclear war, there will continue to be conflict in the realm of physics and chemistry. That is not a drama, but a process. If drama is a thing one sees, there has to be one to see. Drama is human. (p. 4)

Drama does not exist outside a social context but it is an innate part of our lives. The approach we take in this chapter emerges from informal drama that has an educational or pedagogical purpose. These types of drama are known by many names including: educational drama (Wagner, 1999/1976), creative drama (McCaslin, 2005) or creative dramatics (Bolton, 2007), process drama (Bolton, 1996), story drama (Saldaña, 1995), child drama (Bolton, 2007) and sometimes even improvisational drama (Spolin, 1986). Some educators and artists have used these terms interchangeably yet there are distinctions between them. Despite these differences, which are beyond the scope of this chapter, all can be used effectively in classroom settings. We will consider them collectively as "creative drama."

Despite the pervasiveness of drama in the lives of young children, creative drama is an underutilized teaching tool or pedagogical approach in Western teacher education. It is not unusual to find early childhood programs with little drama coursework. When one of the authors began teaching at a United States university several years ago, she was assigned a course that integrated arts methods for the early childhood classroom. The course description highlighted visual arts, music and movement but drama was conspicuously absent from the description. This circumstance is not unusual. Many pre-service teachers' limited exposure to and experiences with creative drama make it difficult for them to fully comprehend the benefits of a drama-infused curriculum approach. Pre-service teachers may read a chapter or two on drama in a college text, but rarely see it used in their pre-service classes or field experiences. We have found with our pre-service teachers that when they are exposed to creative drama, they are often unaware that they are participating in a drama activity. Instructional techniques such as role play and readers theater are recognized by many pre-service teachers, but these same students may not view these as drama.

Connections Between Literacy, Learning and Creative Drama

There are many approaches to literacy and learning. For the purposes of this chapter we see creative drama activities as a tactile and theoretical tool for classroom use and as an additional pedagogy for the classroom practitioner. When we have

asked our pre-service teachers to identify ways that they could potentially use drama in the early childhood classroom, many are unable to come up with strategies. This is a consequence both of their lack of knowledge concerning drama but also their lack of experience in being taught through or using drama techniques. Yet drama holds many characteristics that make it well suited for the pre-service classroom.

Understanding that many pre-service teachers have little to no drama or theater training, we have looked to several scholars and drama practitioners on which to base our classroom activities and lessons. We use and interpret liberally Gallego's and Hollingsworth's (2000) multiple literacies paradigm: school literacies, community literacies, and personal literacies. This paradigm inspires our interpretation of how creative drama can enhance learning and teaching in early childhood and in pre-service teacher education classrooms. Each literacy category is described below with an example and explanation of how creative drama facilitates that particular literacy development.

School Literacies

Gallego and Hollingsworth (2000) define school literacies as "the learning of the interpretive and communicative processes needed to adapt socially to school and other dominant language contexts, and the use of practice of those processes in order to gain a conceptual understanding of school subjects" (p. 5). We interpret school literacies to essentially refer to the ability to learn within school, or formal contexts, particularly within the language and norms of the dominant culture. Creative drama can facilitate school literacies with a focus on language and narrative structure. It has also been used in formal school settings to help students develop problem-solving skills. Heathcote's drama in education is based upon helping children select and solve problems (Wagner, 1999/1976). Sometimes referred to as the "Man in a Mess" (Bolton, 2007) approach, Heathcote helped children select problems that had relevance to the group and work together as an ensemble in solving them. Even when playing theater games, unscripted drama activities focusing on particular tasks or skills; the problem provides necessary tension to move the action forward (Spolin, 1986). Teaching is a daily exercise in problem-solving and good teacher educators attune to the need to help pre-service teachers recognize and solve problems that will confront them in their future classrooms. Drama activities can focus on problems and situations inherent to new teachers and provide a forum for grappling with the practical, ethical and moral aspects of these dilemmas.

Community Literacies

Gallego and Hollingsworth (2000) define community literacies as "the appreciation, understanding, and /or use of interpretive and communicative traditions of culture and community" (p. 9). We interpret community literacies to focus on acquiring the skills to function within particular communities and societies by understanding cultural norms and traditions and being able to communicate effectively with its members. All cultures including those that are dominant, minority and/or oppressed have community literacies. Under the best circumstances, young children develop literacy skills across several communities and a deep understanding of diverse communities that reaches far beyond written texts. These types of literacy require the ability to see the world from multiple vantage points, understanding that circumstances appear differently depending on one's perspective.

Creative drama provides children and pre-service teachers with the opportunity for vicarious experiences and the development of empathy. All types of drama encourage children and adults to put themselves in the place of someone else. Doing so provides opportunities for exploring feelings, places, and perspectives beyond oneself. We have found that pre-service teachers understand this best when they have experienced drama in the classroom and had the "aha" experience of comprehending a previously foreign perspective. When one author used a readers theater script with a group of pre-service teachers, several students who had been asked to play the role of parents commented that they had never before thought of schooling from the parent's perspective. Readers theater made this "aha" experience possible. Eisner (1988) writes, "representation must give way to the primacy of experience. In the end, it is the qualities we experience that provide the content through which meaning is secured" (p. 16). When first-hand experience is not possible, drama can provide a good substitution. Through the approximation of experience, theory, practice and knowledge come together within drama.

Creative drama is also a social activity that requires collaboration and cooperation. Both players and observers need to agree upon common rules (i.e. doctor's do not hurt patients) and have a shared vision (i.e. the cash register is the shoe box on the corner desk). In a very similar way, school personnel must collaborate with one another and cooperate in creating school environments conducive to children's optimal development. The use of role-play or other creative drama techniques can help pre-service teachers approximate the experience of working with colleagues to solve education problems and reach goals.

Personal Literacies

Gallego and Holligsworth (2000) define personal literacies as

> the critical awareness of ways of knowing and believing about self that comes from thoughtful examination of historical or experiential and gender-specific backgrounds in school and community language settings…Personal literacies reflect both the ways students believe they should join in socially accepted discourse communities and the private ways they know they can and would like to be able to participate across communities. (p. 15)

We interpret personal literacies to refer to intrapersonal skills in knowing and understanding oneself, from both an historical and introspective position. This relates to reflectivity and the ability to self-evaluate one's learning and performance. Deep learning does not take place simply by doing: it requires reflection with action. The learner must act and think about what was accomplished, what went well, what could be improved, how this learning influences personal outlooks and beliefs. Reflection is a necessary component of creative drama. Failure to include reflection in dramatic learning diminishes the experience and eliminates the presence of what Latta (2001) describes as 'aesthetic play.' During a recent teacher education class, the students were assigned to create a brief skit (commercial, infomercial, etc.) based on various instructional strategies. Many of the skits were humorous and the group had a lot of fun with the assignment. However, it was not until the students reflected on the task, and what they had learned through the process, that the educational value of it was recognized.

Finally, underlying this multiple literacies paradigm, we also believe that visual and performing arts activities further enhance a student's abilities to extend their intellectual, creative, and emotive sensibilities and talents. Creative drama has attributes that contribute to the development of each literacy type. When we have used dramatic activities with our pre-service teachers, we have found that their knowledge and imagination abilities have expanded quite remarkably. Their subsequent work has demonstrated cognitive and communicative connections between printed, aural, visual or performance-based stimuli and their creating capabilities and capacities to further understand their world have increased many fold.

The notion of infusing the arts into pedagogic practice is not new; it has been advanced for many years. Advocates include John Dewey (1934), Maxine Greene (1995), Elliot Eisner (2005), Tom Barone (2001), and David Booth (2003). It is not within the scope of this chapter to delve deeply into these pedagogues' ideas. However, we see the infusion of creative drama into the early childhood or pre-service classroom to be most successful when put into a constructivist pedagogy as typified by Lev Vygotsky (1978), which looks at a student's learning curve within an environment that considers equally a student's experience, sequential content and context building parameters.

It is in this perspective, we use a Vygotsky inspired interpretation of knowledge development to provoke and inspire our use of creative drama in promoting literacy expansion lesson plans within the multiple literacies paradigm. This follows to some degree Wertsch's (1990) "socio-cultural" concept where he looks at Vygotsky's approach to how the "human mental functioning reflects and constitutes its historical, institutional, and cultural setting" (p. 115). Liberally applied here, in

a pre-service preparation program creative drama learning activity, we hope that our participants' functioning attempts to take into account the connection between literary (in our upcoming Part 2 example) or other artistic works with the creative potential of fusing learning and the awareness of a students' learning environments and literacies while reflecting on the substance and emotions represented by the literary work's characters and content. Furthermore, we hope that by infusing creative drama into reading and writing activities, pre-service teachers will increase their awareness of the way the arts in general, and creative drama in particular, are sign systems that, as Short and Kauffman (2000) advocate, are not just ways to present ideas but also ways to generate ideas. Creative drama and other artistic modes are not just ways to express oneself but also ways to learn.

In a pre-service learning environment, this can be expanded further through Moll and Greenberg's (1990) ideas of students creating "knowledge zones" which are based on their accumulated life experiences, ameliorant knowledge, and their direct ongoing classroom observations and participation. The actual tactile, intellectual and emotive participatory involvement with a creative dramatics learning experience expands the pre-service teacher's creative and pedagogic skills by provoking the pre-service teacher to reflect, "how would I create and execute such an interactive creative drama activity in my classroom?" These activities further the multiple literacies paradigm mentioned earlier by having pre-service teachers make connections between abstract thoughts and the world around them through the vehicle of creative drama. This notion is supported within a Dewey conception. Eisner (2005) expands this idea:

> Any idea that ignores the necessary role of intelligence in the production of works of art is based upon identification of thinking with use of one special kind of material, verbal signs and words. To think effectively in terms of relations of qualities is as severe a demand upon thought as to think in terms of symbols, verbal and mathematical. (p. 107)

Creative drama provides pre-service teachers with opportunities to explore the nuance of qualities through verbal expression, body language and the other tools of expression and communication people use in their interactions with one another.

This pursuit that Eisner refers to is multi-dimensional. There has been a fair amount of research that connects literacy within the multi-modalities sphere of scholarship, (Siegel, 2006; Mavers, 2007; Berghoft, 1998) semiotics and multimodality together (Hull & Nelson, 2005). These scholars profess that students have always been involved in a variety of simultaneous learning spheres. Visual and aural images create signs and signposts of a designed reality at times. Electronic media, commercial television programming, printed mediums, and web-based conventions have all created an ever-growing language of images. These images can serve as interpretive signs to understand further the world around us. From our teaching experiences with young children through pre-service teachers, we strongly believe that these interpretive signs require a connection to tactile learning.

Pre-service teachers should be able to manipulate some tactile aspects of the visual and performing arts in order to influence their students' understanding of

the more abstract psycho-emotional 'signs' that are continually conjured up by electronic, visual, aural and printed communication. The following infusion of creative drama concepts within the promotion of multiple literacies should assist pre-service teachers in that pursuit, and perhaps inspire teacher educators to expand their use of creative drama in pre-service classrooms.

Part II: Sample Literacy Unit [1]

The second half of this chapter provides an example of an extended drama exercise appropriate for the pre-service teacher education classroom. The pre-service teacher can easily adapt this exercise, in part or in its entirety, depending on the age, grade and developmental level of the students involved. Suggested adaptations for primary and preschool-aged children are included; however, readers are encouraged to make their own adaptations based on their particular needs.

The purpose of the unit plan is to bring together tactile and sensory experiences in an exploratory way. Variations of this exercise have been employed at all grade levels from Kindergarten to pre-service teacher preparation programs and with various access points to other areas of the curriculum. These guidelines are the ones that we have used in our pre-service classrooms, based on a typical grade three class (children approximately 8–9 years old). The activities described below are simple enough to be implemented by teachers without drama experience and may be freely adapted to fit specific learning goals. Throughout the unit the goal is not to make dramatic presentations but rather to learn through creative drama.

1. Warm-up or Introductory Activity

Creative drama uses the self as the instrument. Participants' minds, bodies and voices are creative drama's tools so it is important to be certain that students are comfortable in participating. Creative drama involves taking risks: risks of sharing thoughts, ideas and feelings with others and risks of performing with and for one's peers. Children and adults need opportunities to develop comfort in engaging in creative drama activities. Therefore, it is important to begin small, through tasks that build individual comfort, camaraderie, and trust with peers and teachers. Several excellent sources for warm-up activities exist (see Bany-Winters 1997; Gibbs 2001; Spolin, 1986), most are effective with any age group and require no special materials, props, or skills to complete. Many activities common to the early childhood classroom, such as finger plays and creative movement, can serve as effec-

[1] For purposes of clarity we have employed a numerical sequencing system. Readers should feel free to alter these steps.

tive warm-up experiences for creative drama. The success-key is to begin with a simple activity or approach that puts students at ease. The following unit plan does not include prescribed warm-up activities; however, each day's lesson should begin with a brief warm-up appropriate for the particular students.

2. Puppetry

The following series of puppetry exercises has several objectives. First, to have students further their creative presentation skills; to build confidence in speaking in front and with others; to create analytical links between written, spoken and three-dimensional media; to serve as a setup protocol to the more involved writing project at the end of the unit; and for the participants to have an active, tactile, and intellectual learning experience in literacy. Second, simple puppetry provides a good foundation for subsequent creative drama activities because many people feel more comfortable manipulating a puppet than in using only their own body as a performer. The puppet provides a protective front. Finally, the exercise gives pre-service teachers personal experience in engaging in several creative drama activities for learning and teaching. Throughout this exercise, it is important to help pre-service teachers reflect upon their learning and explore possible ways that creative drama may be applied in the early childhood classroom. We suggest that every creative drama session conclude with opportunities for individual and group reflection on what was experienced and learned and how the particular creative drama method can be used in the early childhood classroom. Reflection strategies might include journaling, discussion, cooperative learning activities or any other effective reflection method.

2.1 Paper Bag Puppet Concept

The day before this unit begins, request that students find the one place in their homes where they feel most comfortable. As they sit in that most comfortable place, they should look around the room very closely and find the one object in that room to which they feel most emotionally close. For example, it could be an artifact acquired on a trip such as a seashell or rock; or a piece of clothing from a costume they once wore, perhaps a gift from a loved one; an accoutrement to daily life such as a hairbrush or barrette; a small tool or toy. The rule is that it cannot be animate such as a person, pet or facsimile thereof (i.e. photograph).

After choosing an object, they are to personify it by giving it a name, personality, age, biography, and other human characteristics. They are to come to class the next day with some item that would help describe the object but not the object itself, and its made up history. For example, a student who chose a racing trophy might bring a toy car or wheel. The teacher does the same.

Primary Adaptation: Ask the children to identify a favorite toy and imagine that the toy is suddenly transformed into a person. What type of personality does it have? What is its name and how will it look? Have the children draw a picture of their new person/toy and bring it to class.

Preschool Adaptation: Ask the children to bring a favorite, small stuffed toy that they will introduce to their friends at preschool.

2.2 Paper Bag Puppet Materials

Before class begins, the teacher secures enough of the following materials for the creation of simple paper bag puppets: at least three paper lunch bags per student, masking tape and scissors to cut and secure finger openings for the thumb and pinkie fingers if so desired, crayons, markers or colored pencils.

Primary Adaptation: Paper lunch sacks may be too large for some primary-aged children to manipulate easily. In this instance, smaller paper sacks may be available through craft or hardware stores or stick or sock puppets may be used.

Preschool Adaptation: Paper lunch sacks are too large for some preschool-aged children to manipulate. Stick puppets, such as those made by securing a piece of cardstock to a wooden tongue depressor, are more easily manageable for younger preschool-aged children.

2.3 Object Introduction: Exercise in Imagination and Personification

At the beginning of class, have the students form a circle with their chairs. Each person in turn (after the teacher) will present his or her personified object. This should be no more than one minute per participant. They will introduce their objects now as *personified* objects. They themselves are now the objects along with the items to serve as descriptors. The teacher can contrive a story line such as 'the first day of school for this object' to initiate the presentation. If the class has a large enrollment, we suggest the teacher divide the class into groups of no more than five participants each, where each group member presents to the other group members.

Primary Adaptation: Have each child introduce their toy, using their picture as a prop and sharing key information such as the toy's name, likes, dislikes, etc. This activity is best in small groups with teacher support; however, if it is impossible to provide this support through teachers or aids, a large group activity is preferable. Teachers may need to structure this activity further to suite group dynamics and particular learning needs.

Preschool Adaptation: In a small, relaxed group such as circle time, have each child introduce their stuffed toy to their classmates. The children should be encouraged to tell the toy's name and any special likes or dislikes. Young children should not be forced to participate but many will have already personified their

stuffed toy with a name, feelings, etc. as a natural part of their play. The teacher can encourage creative thinking and personification by following up with questions such as "what is __'s favorite thing to do at the park?"

2.4 Improvisation: Exercise in Creativity, Personification and Character Development

After all the presentations are complete; the teacher divides the participants into 5 person groups and has them, in character, do a brief improvisation exercise in which the setting is lunch time and each group member talks about her lunch. The described lunch contents must be particular to the character's persona. For example, the student representing the racing trophy might bring wax or polish. The purpose of this exercise is several fold: first, to have students listen to each other; second, to further the students' creative conversation abilities; third to develop characterization and fourth, to work towards a group identity. Additionally, this activity builds on previous exercises so that the students move sequentially from the simple to the more complex.

Primary: Depending on the children's experience-level with creative drama, it will be necessary to structure the activity so that expectations are clear. Young children work best when they are aware of important guidelines for time (about three but no more than five minutes), space (children should remain seated as if at a lunch table), and behavior (respect others' personal space, use inside voices, etc.) limitations.

Preschool: Have the children use their toys to sing a simple nursery rhyme or favorite song or to act out part of a book or story. Regardless of which activity is used, the children should be encouraged to use the toy as part of the performance.

2.5 Puppet Bag Creation: Exercise in Creativity and Visual Representation

Have participants draw face sketches of what they believe their persona would resemble if it were an animate object. Then distribute one paper bag to each participant. Students will create a paper bag puppet of their persona. Each participant can choose to either use the bottom half (at the fold) as its head [to place fingers as a sort of mouth or cut finger holes on the sides for arms (thumb and pinkie)]. We strongly suggest putting masking tape around any holes and the bag opening edges to curtail paper destruction. Using coloring crayons, chalks, markers or pencils participants will create their puppets.

Primary: It will be necessary to demonstrate the way to structure the paper bag puppet so that the mouth can move and "arm" holes can be made. Adult supervision is required for the cutting of any holes.

Preschool: Young children should be given latitude in determining what kind of puppet to make; however it is best to avoid television or movie characters as these

are typically so well defined in terms of personality and actions that much of the creative benefit of this exercise will be lost. Children may want to make their toy or a different character based on a book or favorite play theme.

If using stick puppets and cardstock, be sure to encourage creative expression by not using pre-cut forms or patterns. Many young children are unable to use crayons to make dark marks that can be seen from a distance. Puppets are best viewed with vivid, high contrast colors so non-toxic, water-based paints or markers are better materials than crayons. With adult assistance, young children may be able to trim the cardstock once their creations are complete.

2.6 Paper Bag Puppet Scenarios: Exercise in Creativity, Improvisation and Narrative Development

Over the next few days, assign participants into groups of four or five and have them, in their personas and using their puppets, act out daily life scenarios from the perspective of their puppet. Possible scenarios might include cleaning out the puppet's attic, basement or closet (what types of things would be in the attic? how would the task be approached?), caring for a pet, or writing a birthday wish list. Regardless of the scenario, it must be enacted from the perspective of the puppet, not the student. Each scenario should be a maximum of 3 minutes with a clear beginning, which the instructor creates, and a student created middle and ending.

Primary: Children should have some knowledge of narrative structure and be encouraged to plan the action. Children may also need help in moving the action along through dialogue. It might be desirable to have the children revisit the same scenario more than once so that they gain practice in self-evaluating their work and revising for improvement. It is vital that the teacher circulate amongst the groups during this activity to provide support. Following each creative drama session, it is important to lead the children in reflecting on the activity and identifying things that went well and things that can be improved for the next session.

Preschool: Be prepared for very short scenes or scenarios from this age group. Additionally, very young children might enact scenarios through sociodramatic play rather than with the use of puppets. This is appropriate and may be better suited to some groups. If so, the teacher should encourage this dramatic play by providing props that extend and support the dramatic play. Teachers may also need to help the play move along by entering the play as a participant or through the use of questioning (i.e. "What is under __'s bed?) or side coaching.

2.7 The Sock Puppet: Exercise in Creativity and Narrative Representation

After about four such scenarios, the group is ready to move on to the sock puppets. Each participant should bring to class a good size sock. The instructor will assemble, buttons, crafts materials such as wool, ribbon(s), lace, craft glue, small

glue guns and glue sticks, threads, felt marker pens, and any other materials that could be used as accoutrements to the sock. Students may also be encouraged to bring craft and found items. Just as in the paper bag puppet creation, guide the participants into creating their own individual sock puppet either based on their original puppet or a new creation. All participants, regardless of age, need reminding of basic safety procedures in using a hot glue gun.

Primary: If a glue gun is used, only the teacher or assisting adult should handle it.

Preschool: Non-toxic craft glue should be used rather than glue guns and care should be taken to ensure that no part of the puppet presents a chocking hazard. Consequently, buttons and commercial eyes are not recommended for this age group but small pieces of felt may be substituted. The puppets must be sturdy so teachers will need to supervise the gluing and provide adequate drying time before the puppets are used.

3. Story Book Introduction: Theme

This exercise begins after a brief (depending on age and background) discussion of theme that focuses on emotions. The example used here is based on Maurice Sendak's (1963), *Where the Wild Things Are* but additional books, stories, and texts that are thematically related should be added. Begin by reading the texts aloud either to the entire class or in small groups. The reading may be done by the instructor or students, as long as the reader is well prepared and reads with expression.

When adapting this unit for the early childhood classroom, a different aspect of literature or literacy may be used based on the learning needs of the children and the curricular demands of the school. This unit is most effective with a high quality text that the children find personally engaging. The text should also have a strong theme and vivid imagery. More independent readers will benefit most from a text that they can read independently or with little assistance.

Preschool: Young children will want to hear the story several times. Help them explore each story through enactment. The techniques suggested for primary-aged children are appropriate for many preschool-aged children as well.

Primary: Read the story aloud to the students taking sufficient time to show them the illustrations as you go along. The story may be read more than once before moving on to the next step. After the reading, discuss the story by posing several questions. The questions should help the students explore aspects of the theme and might include the following: what is going on in this story? What kinds of things do you hear? What do you see? How does Max feel when he…, Why does Max…?

Young children need opportunities to demonstrate their understanding through multiple modes of communication. In addition to discussing the story, provide op-

portunities for children to explore these prompts through: visual arts (i.e. draw a picture about why you think Max decides to sail home), dramatic expression (i.e. make a face that shows me how Max feels when he is sent to his room), creative movement (i.e. walk across the rug the way you think Max walked up to the Wild Things when he reached the island), and music (i.e. use your rhythm instruments to make the kind of music that reminds you of the Wild Things' rumpus).

3.1 Descriptive Language

After the story is read, go to the board and have the students relate to the class one (preferably) or two word descriptors that stood out to them in the story or describe characters in the story.

As the words come forward, attempt to group them on the board – perhaps in three or four columns: actions, abstracts/ emotions, and time (Table 1). We suggest that students help determine the groupings and that titles are added towards the middle or end of this exercise. After each column has about 7-10 words. Ask the participants to identify idea patterns from both within each group and between groups. Ask the participants to select the most significant idea patterns.

Table 11.1. Where the Wild Things Are

Actions	Abstract Ideas	Feelings	Time
roars	imagination	defiance	sailing
made mischief	rudeness	courageous	night-time
forest growing	bossy	love	weeks
ocean tumbled	regal	afraid	day
leaving	loneliness	hungry	year

Primary: Young children will need help in thinking about and identifying descriptive words. The teacher will need to provide examples while giving the children opportunities to create their own descriptive words (i.e. of themselves, their friends, family members, familiar characters, etc.). A big book is ideal for this activity so that the children can follow along and identify descriptive words as the story is re-read. These words should be organized into a simple chart to facilitate the children's discovery of patterns and commonalities in descriptive words. If the children are not yet able to read, descriptive words can still be discussed and symbolized through pictures. Additionally, the following adaptations recommended for preschool are also appropriate for primary-aged children.

Preschool: Themes should be kept very basic for this group and explored multiple times and in multiple ways. Rather than focusing on descriptive language, additional books focusing on the same theme can be read and explored through enactment, age-appropriate discussion, art, and movement. Picture books such as *When Sophie's Angry—Really, Really Angry* (Bang, 1999) and *Alexander and the*

Terrible, Horrible, No good, Very Bad Day (Viorst, 1987) can help young children better understand emotions and the expression of anger and relate to those themes as they are presented in various contexts and characters. The broad theme should be emphasized with each activity and children invited to apply the theme to themselves (i.e. "I feel angry when…" or "When I am angry I…"). Unfamiliar vocabulary may be explored in a similar way.

3.2 Thematic Statement

As a class, discuss the theme of the story or stories read as part of this unit. Develop a thematic statement that represents all the texts and is no more than one sentence.

Primary: Introduce the concept of theme in a developmentally appropriate way and keep themes simple and direct. Primary-aged children will benefit from several examples of theme and multiple opportunities to express themes from familiar stories.

Preschool: A discussion of theme is not appropriate for preschoolers but young children can display their understanding of what a story is about through discussion, artwork, music, movement and dramatic play. Keep themes simple and discuss similarities in the stories.

4. Theme And Sock Puppets Together

4.1 Scenario Assignment

Participants are put into suggested groups of five maximum. Using their sock puppet characters they must create a scenario that depicts the class developed thematic statement, not the *Where the Wild Things Are* story. The following instructions should be taken as guidelines and adapted to the learners' needs and particular curriculum goals:

The scenario can be no longer than 3 minutes
There must be a beginning, middle and ending
There can only be 2 action sequences
All puppets must be involved, but not necessarily equally

Rehearsal guidelines such as behavior expectations and time and space limits should be provided. It is also important to emphasize that students should practice their performance before presenting it to the group. If possible, provide separate practice space for each group. As the students prepare their scenarios, the teacher

circulates amongst groups to assist and help the group remain on task. He or she makes only those suggestions necessary to keep the scenario storylines in place and to ensure that all students are involved (not necessarily equally).

Primary: Young children need clear structure and defined limits such as scenario time length, clearly defined physical space for rehearsal and performance and basic staging directions (i.e. puppets should face out towards the audience, be sure to speak loudly enough to be heard, etc.). They will also need more teacher support. Depending on the level of experience the children have with similar activities, it might be advisable to divide the scenario development, rehearsal and performance over a few days.

Preschool: With adult support, preschool-aged children can develop simple theme-based scenarios and enact them with the puppets. For example, if the theme is anger and appropriate ways to express anger, the children can discuss situations in which they feel angry such as when another child takes a toy from them. The teacher can serve as narrator with the children performing the simple scenario with their puppets. The teacher and children would then discuss appropriate ways to behave in each situation and act these out with the puppets. Preschool-aged children can also explore these themes through sociodramatic play or simple role-play.

4.2 Performance/Discussion

After a brief rehearsal period, the scenarios are presented to the class. A puppet stage is unnecessary and the audience will focus on the puppets and not the puppeteers if the puppeteers look at their own puppets rather than at the audience. However, an impromptu puppet stage can be created by stretching a flat sheet across the front of the room and having two student volunteers hold it at a comfortable height for the puppeteers. We give our pre-service teachers a choice between performing with or without the impromptu puppet stage. This exercise can be repeated several times using different thematic statements.

It is important to include group discussion following the scenarios to help students reflect upon the activity and make connections between the drama and any curricular goals.

Primary: Appropriate audience behavior should be discussed prior to the performance. Remind the children that each child will have a turn to participate and have the group generate a brief list of audience guidelines (i.e. attentive listening, kind words or no put downs, clapping at the end, etc.). Focus on how it looks and sounds to be a good audience and have the children practice this behavior prior to the performances. As each small group performs, reinforce good behavior through recognition and praise. This discussion should be framed and conducted in a way that is appropriate to the child's developmental level.

Preschool: No formal performance is given (see 4.1) but some children might want to perform their puppet scenario for a parent or guardian. If so, assist the child or children and be sure to explain the process to the parent or guardian.

5. Original Short Story or Poem

Finally, the students are asked to create an original work of some kind such as an original short story or poem formulated on the thematic statement. The teacher can assign specific content and stylistic components as fits the course curriculum goals, interests and abilities of the students. If desired, students may be assigned to create an original work based on a non-written form of literacy such as an oral story, play, dance or painting.

Primary: Young children may complete this exercise individually or as a group. The adaptations suggested for preschool children may also be used for the primary level; however, many primary-aged children will not require as much adult assistance.

Preschool Adaptation: The task must be developmentally appropriate and themes for this age group should be straightforward and simple (i.e. share with others, be kind to animals, etc.). The teacher should help the children explore this theme through multiple modalities (additional story books, drawings, songs, etc.) and to make personal connections to the theme (i.e." I can share my trucks with my brother" or "I can pet my dog softly"). These personal connections can be explored through dramatic play. As the children identify ways they can apply the themes in their own lives and act it out through dramatic play, it is beneficial to explore the theme over an extended period of time. Older preschool and kindergarten children may create a group story that can be transcribed by a teacher or other adult. Preschool-aged children may choose to draw a story that is narrated and subsequently transcribed by an adult.

Connecting the Unit and the Multiple Literacies Paradigm

Infusing the tactile (puppets and dramatic play) with the storybook (thematic understanding), our treatment and application of the multiple literacies paradigm is both multi-modal in appearance and practice and multi-dimensional (simultaneous understandings of personal, sociological, and physical spaces) in the cognitive and aesthetic aspects of the participants' learning experience. From the school literacies perspective participants further their understanding of established and expected grade level language skills. Students also identify textual patterns and themes both within the story and as predictions in their small group scenarios. Throughout the unit, individual and collective imagination abilities expand as stu-

dents create the stories, signs and symbols that connect the established Sendak (1963) story themes with their own creations and simultaneously develop a deeper understanding of these stories, signs and symbols through creative drama activities.

From the community literacies perspective, participants' creations establish environmental and cultural contexts that are indicative of their individual and group creations. Their created storylines and character personalities have self imposed limitations and boundaries which can be historically, culturally, and geographically designed to bring about a verisimilitude that connects their imagined reality to the real world. Components of the unit move from individual to large group to small group activities that help the students make connections between themselves and others and gives them practice in working with different group types. When we have implemented variations of this unit in classrooms of all types, some common themes inevitably emerge as students share their personified objects. These shared themes, as well as acknowledged differences, help build classroom community across gender, racial and socioeconomic diversity.

Finally, the personal literacies, especially as created through their characters and then character associations with other characters (from the story and or from their puppet personas and subsequent interactions with other puppet personas) furthers the students' language and language understanding of their immediate community settings. This takes on a variety of perspectives. For example, do their puppet creations of a personified physical object have a gender, or a social role in a specific community? If so, how does its language, and its social context, interact with the other communities within the evolved story line world? The initial assignment to choose a location of comfort and a physical object with which one holds a strong emotional connection, invites students to consider their personal histories and how physical objects and surroundings connect with our lives.

In addition to these multiple literacies, the actual tactile experience of building the puppet and creating its personality and environments expands the participants' creative artistic imagination and immerses them in the physical, psychological, emotional, and environmental construction of a character. The participants' awareness of time, space, imagination, social behaviors and multiple literacies expand and can be built upon for ongoing learning experiences in this multi-modal framework.

Conclusion

We introduced this chapter with a quotation: "Humans are not vessels to be filled, but fires to be kindled" (unknown, as cited in Cecil & Lauritzen, 1994, p. xiii). Creative drama in the classroom is about kindling fires, helping students of all ages to fully engage their minds and bodies in learning, making personal connections with ideas and shaping them so that they become their own. Humans are

creatures of habit and comfort. It is unreasonable to expect that pre-service teachers, who do not regularly experience and participate in creative drama, will utilize it in their own early childhood classrooms. Our conception of literacy is multimodal and multifaceted; creative drama represents one approach that can attend to all the modes of communication in which human beings engage. As teacher educators who want to infuse a love of learning and a passion for literacy in our students, we must use in our own classrooms every pedagogical approach that we hope our students will use in their work with young children. With perseverance and multiple literacy strategies including creative drama, we can inspire our students to kindle their own fires and pass the flame to future generations.

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