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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A STUDY OF SELECTED PILOT TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO
THE NEW ALBERTA ELEMENTARY DRAMA CURRICULUM

by

ROSANNA DECORE

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1988

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ISBN 0-315-42791-4

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Dear Dr. Thornton;

I am seeking permission to include a copy of the enclosed chart in my M.Ed. thesis. The chart is page 47 of the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983.

The thesis has progressed very well, and I am now in the final stages (finally!). My orals are set for April 6, so I am trying to get all these final items sorted out.

Thank you for your help with this copyright matter. I'd also like to thank you again for your 1984 interview regarding the new Elementary Drama Curriculum. It gave me so much useful information for my study.

Sincerely,


Rosanna Decore



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Good luck in your forthcoming orals. I hope they will be a successful conclusion to a worthwhile endeavour.

Best wishes for continued success in your career!

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Merv Thornton
Acting Director
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DEGREE: MASTER OF EDUCATION

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1988

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DEDICATION

TO MY PARENTS,
FOR THEIR LASTING INFLUENCE

ABSTRACT

This study examined how teachers with varied backgrounds in drama responded to the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum they pilot-taught in the 1983-84 school year. It focused on their experience in the pilot program and how they felt about that experience.

Technological and humanistic approaches to education were presented, and the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide was examined and found to take a humanistic approach. It attempted to provide students with an opportunity to develop their potential in a holistic manner (dealing with all facets of the person: emotional, physical, intellectual, social, spiritual, etc.) in order to gain an understanding of themselves, others, and the world around them. The meaning and intent of drama and its value in the educational system was presented.

Six teachers who pilot-taught the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum in the Central Alberta area were interviewed for the study. One in-depth interview with each of the respondents was conducted, audio-taped, then transcribed and analyzed. The teachers gave their impressions of

the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, inservicing for the pilot program, and resources for teaching drama. They presented their interpretation of drama and theatre, attitudes toward and philosophy of drama, and provided recommendations for change to the drama program and in their approach to teaching drama in another school year.

Upon analysis of the teachers' responses in these categories, themes emerged. The main overriding theme was how the amount and type of prior exposure to drama affected almost every aspect of their perception of drama and their involvement in the drama pilot program. Teachers who had taken courses in creative drama indicated they felt more comfortable teaching drama. Their understanding of the nature of creative drama more closely paralleled the philosophy of the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide than did their counterparts. Prior exposure to drama provided teachers with resources for teaching drama.

Reflections regarding future curriculum implementation centered on supplying sufficient inservicing and follow-up support to provide the basic rudiments and an understanding of the intent and philosophy of the curriculum, even to teachers without a background in the subject.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to offer my heartfelt appreciation to:

The ~~six~~ teachers who so graciously took time out of their busy schedules to share their insights with me to make this study possible. Their candidness and sincerity were greatly appreciated.

The principals and superintendents who granted permission for the project to go ahead.

Dr. Joyce Edwards and Dr. Therese Craig, Co-advisors, for their guidance and direction with the study. I couldn't have asked for two more approachable, gracious, delightful people to work with. I learned so much.

Dr. David Dillon, for his comments as a committee member.

Julia Blazuk and Dr. Merv Thornton, for sharing their valuable knowledge of the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum.

Donna James, for doing such a lovely job typing the thesis.

My family and friends, for their interest and encouragement.

And most especially, my mother, for her constant support, patience, and invaluable insight.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to find out how teachers with varied backgrounds and experience in drama responded to the pilot program of the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide they pilot-taught during the 1983-84 school year.

Background to the Study

Creative drama can provide a valuable function in the educational system as a marvellous teaching tool which can be used to tap into students' individuality - to stretch and magnify their unique capabilities through an understanding of themselves and the world and people around them. Dorothy Heathcote states "drama is a means of learning, a means of widening experiences." (Johnson, 1984, p. 82). She further explains that the teaching of drama can be a way of "educating our children to become sensitive, aware, mature citizens, able not only to see the world from their own viewpoint, but through the eyes of others." (Johnson, 1984, p. 85).

Creative dramatics focuses on an exploration of one's self in a holistic manner, dealing with all facets of the human being: emotional, social, physical, intellectual, spiritual. The drama class simulates or represents situations from the real world which enable students to explore feelings and responses, relationships and interactions with other people, thereby gaining an empathy and understanding of people, the environment, their world. Gaining an understanding of self and others can help students cope with the complexities of life.

The ability to understand oneself and others is extremely important at this time in history when the cold reality of technology bombards us on every side:

The language of technology has become the language of our times. Jargon that was once the exclusive domain of those industries now dubbed "hi-tech" is commonplace, as new applications for the computer are found in every area of endeavour, and consumers gain access to technological innovations almost as soon as they have been developed. (Duthie, 1988, p. 20).

As a society, we must ensure a balance between technology and humanity. In the rapidly-growing trend toward a high-technology dominated world, society must not lose touch with the inner

strength, the compassion, the feeling and emotion that is within all human beings.

By discovering our potential as human beings we participate in the evolution of the human race. We develop the knowledge, the wisdom, perhaps, required to guide our exploration of technology. (Naisbitt, 1984, p. 51).

Creative drama is one way to tap into that inner power, that individuality which can enhance a person's understanding and capability.

This study will examine how six teachers with various backgrounds and experience in drama reacted to and approached the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum they were asked to pilot during the 1983-84 school year.

Research Questions

A new Elementary Drama Curriculum was piloted in Alberta in 1983-84. This researcher was interested in finding an answer to the following question: What was the experience of some of the teachers who pilot-taught the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum and how did they feel about the whole experience?

In order to find the meaning of this question, ten sub-questions were asked:

1. How did pilot teachers with varied backgrounds in drama respond to the new curriculum?

2. How did they approach the teaching of the new curriculum?

3. What were their thoughts about the whole experience of being a pilot teacher, and more exclusively, a drama pilot teacher?

4. Were the teachers able to understand and accept the philosophy set out in the curriculum guide?

5. Did prior experience with creative dramatics make a difference to their teaching of the subject (since drama is more of a strategy or methodology of teaching rather than dependence on a body of knowledge)?

6. How did the teachers feel about the inservicing for the project?

7. How did the teachers react to the curriculum guide itself?

8. Did the teachers need or get support from consulting personnel regarding the project throughout the year?

9. Did the physical setting or number of students in the classroom have any effect on their perceived success in teaching the drama?

10. What were the pilot teachers' frustrations, jubilations, positive and negative feelings about the whole pilot project experience?

Limitations

1. The researcher's personal perspective of drama and the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum possibly affects the interpretation of the findings.

2. The small sample of subjects in the study restricts generalizability.

3. Only one interview was conducted with each respondent.

4. The researcher relied on the candidness and reflection of the pilot teachers when recounting their pilot project experience.

5. The researcher did not take the results of the interviews back to the respondents for verification because the interviewing took place at the end of the school year in which the pilot project was undertaken. By the time the

audio-taped interviews were transcribed into written form, the teachers were no longer available for consultation (e.g.: some had moved, some were no longer teaching, etc.).

Significance of the Study

This study provides an opportunity for the respondents involved to examine their experience and express their views regarding the project they undertook in the 1983-84 school year, and for other teachers to learn from the results of their experience. This information could be used by the Department of Education in revision of curriculum, knowledge of curriculum implementation, need and design for new curriculum inservices and workshops, and follow-up support for pilot teachers.

Organization of the Chapters

This study is comprised of five chapters: Chapter One presents an introduction to the study, and its purpose, limitations, and significance. In Chapter Two, a review of the literature related to the study is examined. Chapter Three explains

the methodology and logistics used for the study. The findings gleaned from interviewing the pilot teachers are presented in Chapter Four, and Chapter Five offers reflections on the research and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter Two presents literature related to the value of drama - for individuals and society, and as part of the educational system. It examines premises regarding technological and humanistic concepts toward learning and life. An examination of the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide which the teachers in this study used in their pilot project is also presented.

I. Meaning and Intent of Drama and Its Value in the Educational System

Drama offers the possibility of a synthesis of language, feeling, and thought which can enrich the individual's inner world, increase awareness and understanding of the outer world, and develop competence and confidence in operating within it. (O'Neill and Lambert, 1982, p. 311).

Drama - creative dramatics, drama-in-education
- spontaneous drama - developmental drama -- all are

names for the method, technique or teaching tool which can be used to tap into students' individuality, to stretch and magnify their unique capabilities by enabling them to holistically explore all facets of their being by providing them with an understanding of themselves, other people, and the world around them.

The word drama is derived from the ancient Greek word "dran", meaning "to do". (Tyas, 1971, p. xiii). Courtney (1980, p. vii) explains drama as "the human process whereby imaginative thought becomes action." In drama, "we are concerned with inner imaginative thought and the spontaneous dramatic action which results." (Courtney, 1980, p. 2).

However, drama is not something strange or foreign, but rather is a natural, instinctive way of understanding life. Slade (1967, p. 1) states that drama "is not an activity that has been invented by someone, but the actual behavior of human beings." For "the art of drama is rooted in humans needs, born from the needs of humans to give dramatic form to their intense feelings and to impressions received from the world around them." (Siks, 1983, p. 9).

As young people are faced with an increasingly more complex, demanding world, they must gain skills that enable them to understand this world, to empathize, to make decisions effectively and cope successfully. "And how do we understand the external world? By creating a drama. In order to understand other people, we 'put ourselves in their shoes' - attempt to see things from their point of view." (Courtney, 1980, p. 7). Through drama, teachers can provide students with an opportunity to deal with the real world:

Drama presents a vital and immediate way of explaining the world and as such provides an easily accessible form of knowing for children. ... It is in the area of human feelings and values that learning takes place when insights and understandings arise within the dramatic mode. However, remote the subject-content may appear to be, the underlying learning relates to the human psyche, the real world and the people in it. (Wooton, 1982, p. 198).

Dorothy Heathcote (from McCaslin, 1981, p. 78) states "It seems sensible to me that if there is a way of making the world simpler and more understandable to children, why not use it?" Heathcote explains how drama can do this:

Dramatizing makes it possible to isolate an event or to compare one event with another, to look at events that have happened to other people in other places and times perhaps, or to look at one's own experience after the event, within the safety of knowing that just at this moment it is not really happening. (McCaslin, 1981, p. 78).

Through dramatic activities, we "can make children aware of life without causing them to be burnt in its flames." (Tyas, 1971, p. xiv).

Helping students to understand themselves and the world around them should be an essential part of schooling. For "the teacher's task does not finish when the child leaves school. His work should fit the child for fuller life in the adult world; and assuredly an understanding and appreciation of drama will do that." (Burton, 1964, p. 12).

By dealing with a variety of people in a variety of situations in drama, students learn to explore the dynamics of relationships. "Whether the pupils are working on their own imaginative creation or those of classic or modern playwrights, they are, through their dramatic involvement, exploring and coming to terms with attitudes, dilemmas and values which stem from the relationship between an

individual and other human beings in a social context." (Wooton, 1982, p. 198, 199). In creative dramatics, "within the group are different sorts of cultural background, varied social classes, and every type of personality." (Durland, 1975, p. 56).

The drama is a slice of life; the actors are the sum of the characters they are portraying, plus their own personalities, unique in themselves, with the problems they carry within themselves. You, as the teacher, are helping these small people, not only to interpret new personalities, but also to integrate the effect of one child upon another. (Durland, 1975, p. 56).

Drama, as a representational view of life, can help students gain understanding and insight. For "life is a drama" (Courtney, 1980, p. 1) and drama "is the basis of human life and, ... an essential component of all genuine education." (Courtney, 1980, p. 2). "Education is the process of helping humans find essential meanings in life. ... These meanings accrue by living through actual and symbolic experiences, both in life and in role." (Donaldson, 1985, p. 193).

Finding meaning and developing thought/feeling/language potential are bound up with the child's attempts to make sense of life's situations by being involved in them and by drawing inferences from them. (Donaldson, 1985, p. 193)

Participating in activities which help students explore and understand their own feelings and their relationships with other people can help them cope with the complexity of life. Drama offers so much potential as an excellent teaching strategy which can be used to help students sort out and understand themselves and their world, and should therefore be an important part of the school system:

If pupils are to be helped to cope with the real world now and in the future, they must be given the skills that will enable them to adapt to changing circumstances. In this sense drama must be regarded as an essential discipline in the school curriculum. (Wooton, 1982, p. 199).

Through drama, the student uses all facets of being human to understand what being human is all about. For drama deals with the whole person.

It fosters holistic learning, holistic education:
"an education which develops the whole person -
emotionally, physically, intellectually,
imaginatively, aesthetically, socially, and
spiritually." (Craig, 1984, p. 1). To work
effectively for each student, formal schooling must
address and encompass all facets of the human being:

The ability to learn differs from age to
age and from individual to individual, but
we must realize that this ability to learn
involves not only intellectual capacity but
also social, perceptual, physical, and
psychological factors. (Duke, 1974, p. 9).

However, because of trends prevalent at specific
time periods in history, certain aspects of human
development are sought after and idealized. The
current homage paid to organized sports and the
ideal physique is one such example. In the school
system, the emphasis upon this one aspect of
development (physical) translates through "physical
release via elaborate physical education programs
and organized sports." (Duke, 1973, p. 37). But
Duke admonishes: "The emphasis upon strength and
other kinds of physical efficiency seems to have
limited relevance to daily living and has small
impact upon personality development." (Duke, 1973,
p. 37).

In other words, educators must strive to deal with all aspects of the child, and not concentrate on just one facet. Unfortunately, in today's technologically-modelled school structure, the intellect is often stressed to the exclusion of all other facets of a human being. From Sputnik to Star Wars, at this current time in history, there seems to be a major emphasis on pursuit of the technological ideal. Bullough, Goldstein, and Holt (1984, p. 5) state that "the most fundamental pre-understanding in modern industrialized countries is the technocratic ideology." They explain:

Technocratic - mindedness is indicated by an uncritical acceptance of the view that only the methods of a narrow conception of science produce genuine knowledge.

Furthermore, it is assumed that the only appropriate way to solve our social - political - ethical problems is by applying the methods of science to these problems. Hence there is, on the part of the technocratically-minded, an exclusive concern with measurement, prediction, control, efficiency, and governance by experts in addressing all human problems. (1984, p. 6, 7).

Advancements in technology unquestionably provide many benefits for individuals and for society as a whole. However, "when we fall into the trap of believing or, more accurately, hoping that technology will solve all our problems, we are actually abdicating the high touch of personal responsibility." (Naisbitt, 1984, p. 51).

Preoccupation with technology can thwart the healthy growth of a society. The healthy growth of a society fosters holistic growth in its members, positive attitudes, individuals with a well-developed sense of self-worth and the ability to listen, communicate effectively, empathize, and work through problems using all facets of human-beingness to make living life more rewarding, fulfilling, enjoyable.

"At present, schooling intentionally and unintentionally, plays an important role in reproducing technocratic values." (Bullough et al. 1984, p. 5). Barone (1983, p. 21) believes "the dominance of the technological spirit in matters of schooling has ... shunted the development and blunted the dissemination or at least undermined the acceptance - of alternative conceptions of the educational process."

However, Bullough et al. (1984, p. 5) state that "public education still remains one of the hopeful means for fostering a human world." For there are alternatives available: approaches to schooling which are more humanistic, more holistic. Duke (1974, p. 9) suggests that "to achieve an adequately balanced, diversified program in general education which will move to meet the various needs of all students, more emphasis will have to be placed on the esthetic and creative aspects of learning."

Technologically-oriented schooling, which focuses primarily on the intellect, seems to ignore the emotional and intuitive aspects of learning. These must not be forgotten.

Education has too long been almost wholly rational, without any consideration of the emotions and how these can be linked to learning ... Experiences involve feelings, and feelings have been traditionally denied legitimacy as educational tools. (Weinberg, 1972, p. 7).

Maley and Duff (1978, p. 2) point out that "the intellect rarely functions without an element of emotion, yet it is so often just this element that is lacking in teaching material." It is the

emotional experience in their lives that people remember. And drama is one of the rare opportunities in the school system "to provide children with healthy channels for the expression of emotions." (Stewig, 1983, p. 17). "When working on ideas in drama, a child can also work out frustrations, fears, and inhibitions that ordinarily must be kept in during more conventional school classes." (Stewig, 1983, p. 17).

Cottrell (1975, p. 19) suggests that as a child gets older "the need to know who one is, particularly in relation to others, becomes increasingly important and bewildering as relationships are enlarged. The need for opportunities that afford emotional release in constructive ways also grows as life takes on greater complexity." At this time in history when people are distancing themselves from each other in so many ways (eg.: loss of the extended family, isolation via television-itis, computer-itis, etc.), it is vitally important to provide students with the opportunity to get in touch with their feelings and to learn to express their emotions in a positive way in a constructive environment. Drama can afford this opportunity.

It should be pointed out that although drama involves dealing with emotions: "Creative dramatics is a process in which one communicates - to another or others - some message, feeling, or emotion" (Brizendine, 1982, p. 30), it is not an uncontrolled mayhem of emotions: "Drama is not a method for releasing basic emotions but a representational form which requires for its practice control of oneself and respect for others." (Wooton, 1982, p. 185). "In providing emotional release, it also offers opportunity for emotional control, and thus it provides an inner self-discipline." (Courtney, 1974, p. 47):

This illustrates again that drama is a method of helping students understand not only themselves, but other people as well, thereby learning to empathize and communicate more effectively.

Drama is based on internal empathy and identification and leads to external impersonation (both overt and covert). It is this act of impersonation that creates meaning through interaction with the external world, specifically other people. (Courtney, 1980, p. vii).

In drama, students are learning about themselves and about life and living. In 1967, Brian Way cautioned:

If education is concerned with preparing young people for living rather than for a job in life, then it must concern itself with the whole person, and even the most complacent of educationalist must be prepared to face the fact that whatever else has been or is being achieved in education today, there are still some gaps when we consider this wholeness. (p. 6).

By 1975, Morris felt education would change: "the acquisitive, competitive, industrial society of 'western' man, is now plainly breaking down, and the assumptions made in the past about its nature and functions are ripe for re-examination." (Niblett, 1975, p. 90). And more recently, Siks stated hopefully that currently there is "a major revolution to incorporate in basic education the aesthetic, humanistic, and moral development of children and youth in consonance with their cognitive and affective development." (1983, p. 264). This is humanistic, holistic education of which drama can be an integral part. McLendon (1982, p. 23) observes that "creative dramatics ... offers an experience in holistic learning - using both cerebral hemispheres of the brain." For in drama, students are using not just one function of the brain, but rather many functions: through thought and problem-solving, language development, fine and large motor control and coordination, aesthetic appreciation, creativity, etc.

Although a large component of "creative dramatics" is the "creativity": "Drama is an art which nurtures creativity and possibilities" (Siks, 1968, p. 6). Duke (1974, p. 18) feels that "creative expression has rarely been recognized as a serious objective of education". If educators are truly concerned about striving to expand their students' full potential, they must be concerned with the role creativity plays in holistic learning:

Creative expression and drama play important roles in leading education toward a more humanistic approach to learning as well as toward the development of students who are capable of responding more rationally to their changing world. (Duke, 1973, p. 1x).

"A child's creativity can be developed by exposure to drama. ... Such empirical studies as the one by Schmidt, Goforth, and Drew (1975) done with matched groups of kindergarten students, have demonstrated conclusively that children's creativity can be enhanced through creative drama." (Stewig, 1983, p. 17). Educators must be aware that nurturing and sustaining students' creativity is every bit as important as developing all other aspects of their being. For "wherever creative work

flourishes, someone has established communication with his inner self." (Tanner, in McCaslin, 1981, p. 31). It is the responsibility of educators to ensure that students' creativity is not forgotten along the wayside somewhere through their school career:

Many educators have ignored the need for balance between the affective and the cognitive in the educational process. For years educators have given lip service to the fostering of creativity, but the creative process has remained something of a mystery, and few opportunities are presented to students in which creative expression is allowed. (Duke, 1973, p. 1x).

Of course, drama in the school system is a perfect opportunity for students to explore creativity, to partake of holistic learning, to embark on a journey of self-discovery, so they can become aware of and begin to understand their own actions and those of the people around them.

II. The Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum

This chapter has discussed the role of drama as a facilitator for humanistic, holistic learning, and its function in providing students with skills which

would enable them to understand and cope with the real world. The research undertaken in this study involved pilot teachers' experience with the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum piloted in the school year of 1983-84. This curriculum will now be examined to gain an understanding of its history, inception, intent, and philosophy -- to determine if this curriculum presents drama as a means to achieve holistic, humanistic learning which enables students to explore their inner selves and their relationships with other people and the world around them.

a) A Brief History: How This Curriculum
Came Into Being

In interviews conducted with Julia Blazuk, chairperson of the Ad-hoc Committee, Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum, and Dr. Mary Thornton, who at the time of the interview was the Alberta Education Associate Director of Curriculum for Language Arts and Fine Arts, the researcher was able to learn of the history of this new curriculum.

Although there had been a Junior-Senior High School drama curriculum in place in Alberta for several years, there was no elementary program.

However, drama leaders (consultants, workshop leaders) throughout the province felt there was a need for such a program. They 'felt the pulse' of the community (Alberta) through the overwhelming attendance by generalist teachers at drama workshops and conferences sponsored by Alberta Culture, Performing Arts Education in Red Deer, Fairview, Drumheller, and throughout the province. Obviously, elementary teachers were interested - because they were coming to the workshops seeking information about the subject, partaking in sessions in mime, improvisation, puppetry, mask-making, make-up, movement, directing, and integration of drama into other subject areas.

Alberta Education (the central office of the provincial government responsible for education in Alberta) had a Fine Arts Coordinating Committee, but its elementary education members were in Music and Art - none in Drama. A Drama person was recruited, and ultimately a position paper was formulated by the committee - seeking the creation of an elementary drama program. A survey of principals and superintendents throughout the province indicated enough positive reaction to an elementary drama program that the curriculum was able to move

ahead. The Curriculum Policies Committee of Alberta Education reviewed the position paper and offered suggestions. The Fine Arts Coordinating Committee made revisions, and eventually a workable solution evolved: the development of an optional elementary drama curriculum which could be used as an integrator or as a separate subject. Being given the choice of integrating drama into other subject areas or teaching it as a separate subject enabled teachers to use the method they felt most comfortable with or whichever fit more effectively into their timetable.

The new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum was piloted in the 1983-84 school year by selected teachers throughout the province, and was implemented as an optional subject in the following year.

The philosophy of the guide will now be examined.

b) Philosophy of the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide

The Alberta - Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide's emphasis appears to be on the growth and development of all aspects of an individual through a process of discovery and awareness. The 1981 Fine Arts

Coordinating Committee which had been organized to create an elementary drama curriculum presented this definition of elementary drama as a school subject:

Elementary drama is concerned with the intellectual, emotional and physical development of the child through acting out. It capitalizes on the natural development, imaginative capacity, needs and abilities of the child in settings which are non-competitive, communicative, and cooperative. It achieves its purposes through skill-building and the acquisition of content as well as through direct experiencing.

It is not concerned with those aspects of theatre which require a high degree of deliberate control and professionalism; its focus is educative rather than performative. Yet, many of the skills learned through drama encourage an awareness of the theatre as an art form. (Fine Arts Coordinating Committee Position Paper, Alberta, 1981, 1).

The "Drama Philosophy" of the pilot edition of the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide supports this definition:

Drama is both an art form and a medium for learning and teaching. It can develop the whole person - emotionally, physically, intellectually, imaginatively, / aesthetically, and socially - by giving form and meaning to experience through acting out. It fosters positive group interaction as students learn to make accommodations in order to pursue shared goals.

The dramatic growth parallels the natural development of the student. This growth is fostered in an atmosphere which is non-competitive, cooperative, supportive, joyful yet challenging.

The overall goal of drama is to foster a positive self-concept in students by encouraging them to explore life by the assumption of roles and by the acquisition of dramatic skills. The imaginative exploration involves setting up a dramatic situation, acting out that situation, communicating within that situation and reflecting on the consequences.

It is this reflection which provides the knowledge for self-development. (Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983; p. 2).

This drama curriculum deals with creative dramatics and not theatre, as stated on the first page of the introduction to the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide: "Drama is for the classroom, not the theatre." (Alberta Education Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983). However, it does encourage leading students to an appreciation of theatre in its own right:

As students progress through the dramatic forms of expression at the secondary level, greater emphasis is placed upon the development of the individual as a creator, performer, historian, critic and patron. Here the self-development and socialization processes of the student are extended by developing an appreciation of theatre as a traditional art form. (Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983, p. 2).

"Dran - the ancient Greek word from which the word drama is derived - means "to do" (Tyas, 1971, p. xiii). Creative dramatics incorporates this concept through the use of "parallel participation" in which everyone in the classroom is involved in the drama activity: students, teachers, visitors - to avoid the stigma of performer/observer. The Elementary Drama Curriculum intertwines this participation-based approach with a holistic concept of learning about the real world by answering the question "What is this 'drama' stuff all about?" in this way:

It is learning through action - reflection
 - personal experience - vicarious
 experience - co-operation - presentation -
 discussion - enjoyment.

Drama is for the classroom not the theatre.

It is setting up a situation where the student can discover why people behave the way they do, so that they can reflect on their own behavior.

It encourages divergent thinking and affective development. (Alberta Education Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983.)

The goals of the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide substantiate this philosophy further. The guide states as its three goals:

To acquire knowledge of self and others which results from reflecting on dramatic play.

To develop competency in communication skills through drama.

To foster an appreciation for drama as an art form. (Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983, p. 2).

The philosophy of the Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide appears to be a holistic, humanistic approach to learning based on children's intrinsic, natural way of learning and individual rate of growth and development.

c) The Elementary Drama Guide's View
of Students/Children

The prime function of education is to serve the needs of children:

The schools have a common obligation: to give all the children of all the people a good education ... the school must regard the human worth of each student as its full trust. Nothing less than full commitment to each child is its burden, and failure in this intent is betrayal. (Crary, 1969, p. 14,15). Humanistic education views the child as a potential orchestra and encourages him to experiment with every instrument and every theme that is in him. Anything less is to regard the child and education as limited to that which we are sure we can produce with our own resources. (Weinberg, 1972, p. 7).

The developers of the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum - drama teachers, university professors, consultants - obviously have high regard, respect for, and faith in children and their potential and ability. In a letter in the introduction of the curriculum guide from the developers of the guide to their colleagues (drama curriculum users), they offer this guidance:

Your children are the greatest resource in drama. By building upon the richness of their imaginations and their natural propensity to accept the "magic if", well-loved stories, poems, historical situations and everyday experiences will become vehicles for self-development. A growing confidence in their ability to imagine, to develop ideas, and to articulate them, as well as a better understanding of self and others, are all natural outgrowths of using drama in the elementary classroom. (Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983).

Concern for developing children's full potential in a joyful, positive atmosphere using their natural means of development permeates this entire curriculum.

d) Premise and Organization of the
Curriculum Guide

The new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum is based upon the natural way in which children learn about life - through play. "The dramatic growth parallels the natural development of the student." (Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983, p. 1). Not only does this curriculum focus on the natural way in which children learn, it is also very conscious of following and utilizing children's natural stages of development. "The Continuum of Child Growth in Drama" (Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983, p. 6) begins with play, then moves to dramatic play, which are both referred to as "usually child initiated / usually preschool" on the continuum. The continuum moves to the "adult initiated /

school" stages leading from dramatic play to structured dramatic play, and then to the various components of the dramatic forms of expression, which focus on moving and speaking. Each of these progressive stages of the continuum will be examined.

e), Play

In the Alberta Elementary Curriculum Guide, the "Continuum of Child Growth in Drama" begins with play because "natural play is the basis for the development of the dramatic forms of expression." (Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983, p. 6). Burton (1964, p. 22) states that the child's "own instincts and play are the motive power, the means by which he learns."

In the element of instinct it is natural for the child to do - to play; children play with things, then play beings things. By using this unlearned tendency - this instinct - we can lead the child to experience the dramas of life and, through his participation in channelled dramatic play, the way is opened for him to discover his world and his own self; he is also enabled to experiment, for himself, with the proportions and harmony essential for living his life. ... Child Drama is channelled creative play. (Tyas, 1971, p. xiii).

Play is an essential part of learning. It is extremely important for children to experience stages of play in order to successfully cope with their lives, and later, with their lives as adults:

Play is the principal instrument of growth. Without play there can be no normal adult cognitive life; without play, no healthful development of affective life; without play, no full development of the power of the will. (McCaslin, 1984, p. 8).

The Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide begins with play because play is a natural, normal way in which children learn about their world.

f) Dramatic Play

After play, the next stage of the continuum is Dramatic Play:

Dramatic play is characterized by children's abilities to perceive, imagine, impersonate, and imitate actions through identification with a particular person, thing or event. (Siks, 1983, p. 6).

The Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide (Pilot Edition, 1983, p. 10) defines dramatic play as "an

experience in which a child takes on the feelings, attitudes, and actions of a person or thing." and states the importance of dramatic play:

The unique quality of dramatic play is that the child "uses himself symbolically to stand for someone else or something else" (Cottrell) and in so doing develops "physical, emotional and intellectual identification with a fictitious situation. (O'Neill, et al.) (quoted in Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983, p. 10).

Like play, dramatic play is not foreign to a child. "Dramatic play is natural to a child. Play is how children learn about and explore the world around them." (Rubin, 1977, p. 4).

g) Structured Dramatic Play

Usually play and dramatic play are experienced by children before they begin attending school. The next step on the continuum is the adult-initiated classroom experience of structured dramatic play:

Structured dramatic play is a creative activity initiated and stimulated by the teacher, in which the child who takes on the feelings, attitudes, or actions of a person or thing, is encouraged to express self through the acting out of personal experience. (Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983, p. 11).

The teacher's role in this case is that of a guide, a planner:

The teacher is responsible for the identification of both individual growth needs and needs related to the curriculum, and in this role she identifies the purposes and goals around which the drama activities will be built. The teacher will most often be responsible for providing the stimulation and overall plan that can elicit from the children the kind of sincere involvement that makes the drama process valuable in terms of both human and academic growth. (Cottrell, 1975, p. 27).

Discussing the importance of structured dramatic play, the Curriculum Guide states:

Structured dramatic play "can be used to provide a continuity of experimental learnings remarkably similar to the opportunities in the spontaneous dramatic play the child intuitively uses." The teacher's job "is to discipline and direct the child's play into channels where he needs to make worthwhile decisions and discoveries." (Pemberton, Billings and Clegg).. (Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983, p. 11).

Structured dramatic play leads into the next step on the continuum: dramatic forms of expression.

h) Dramatic Forms of Expression

The final stage on the continuum, Dramatic Forms of Expression, focuses on the acquirement of moving and speaking skills:

The continuation of child growth from play to the dramatic forms of expression is work in the various forms of moving and speaking. Each of these forms develops the child in some aspect of artistic growth and opens up avenues of integrations of the forms in other subject areas. (O'Neill and Lambert, p. 22, 23). (Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983, p. 14).

The Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide presents these forms as moving skills: dramatic movement and mime, and these forms as speaking skills: choral speech and story telling. A combination of moving and speaking skills are then presented, comprised of dramatization, group drama, playmaking, puppetry, choric drama, reader's theatre, and story theatre.

The Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983, p. 14) defines this final stage on the continuum:

Dramatic forms of expression are the vehicles through which the art of drama is realized and communicated for the enjoyment of self and others.

And of course, of major significance in the perpetuation of the exploration and enjoyment of drama is the teacher. The teacher's role in implementing the drama curriculum, and curriculum implementation in general, will be examined in the next two sections of this chapter:

III. The Role of the Teacher In Teaching Drama

Drama involves participation by everyone in the drama class, with children (and teacher) learning by doing. Courtney (1980, p. 2) cites John Dewey's observation that "the primary root of all educative activity is the instinctive, impulsive attitudes and activities of the child, and not in the presentation and application of external material." An effective learning model allows "the students to share their knowledge of the world, of the task, and of language." (Proctor, 1986, p. 71).

Courtney explains further that in drama "teachers have to take a risk.":

In the traditional classroom, the teacher is a god-like figure who dispenses knowledge and the students listen quietly and, subsequently, regurgitate facts. In the drama classroom the students make decisions; they are active and (sometimes) noisy. The teacher is in indirect control rather than direct control - leading rather than instructing. (Courtney, 1980, p. 3).

The Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide views the teacher as a learner and facilitator for students' learning. (See Figure 1: "The Function of the Teacher in Drama"). The Guide defines specific functions of the teacher in drama:

REFLECTOR: A method (in or out of role) which causes the students to ponder their actions.

OBSERVER: The act of distancing in which the teacher watches and listens in order to facilitate the drama's progress.

ASSESSOR: One who makes personal evaluative decisions and leads children into critical thinking.

SIGNER: A cue (verbal, gestural, facial, props) is given indicating changed setting status or character of the teacher and environment.

NEGOTIATOR: It is endowing the student with the power to make co-operative decisions.

STRATEGIST: Seeks for the most effective plan to fulfill the needs of the class through the progress of the drama.

SEEKER: One who is open to alternative methods, sources, inspirations, areas of learning to further personal understanding. (Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983, p. 48).

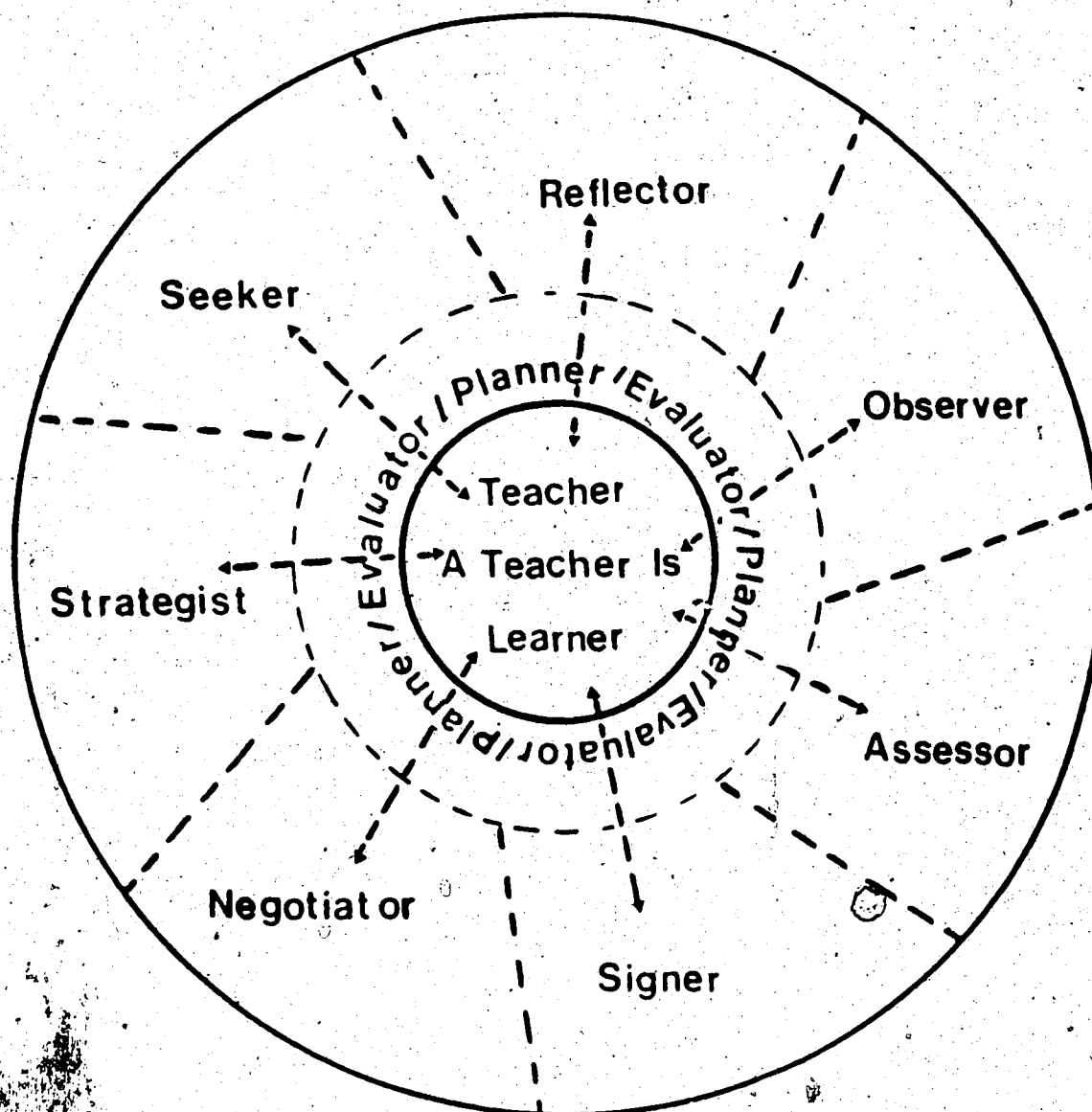
But the curriculum also acknowledges the varying background and experience of teachers by answering the question "How Do I Begin?" with "Begin where you feel most comfortable." and "Plan lessons which are compatible to your own teaching style - consider class size, space, time, and control needed to realize the objectives of the lesson." (Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983).

At the beginning of the pilot edition of the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, 1983, the developers of the curriculum say this to teachers in their "Dear Colleague" letter:

We also wish to alleviate fears teachers might have with regard to introducing drama in their classrooms and provide the more experienced teachers with further rationale, sequential development of skills, and appropriate resources.

FIGURE 1

THE FUNCTION OF THE TEACHER IN DRAMA



(From: Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide,
Pilot Edition, 1983, p. 47, used with
permission)

And the guide follows through with this commitment, for each unit has a basic starting point and examples of lesson plans, and also offers extensions and bibliographies for further exploration of each topic.

Learner, doer, guide, facilitator for learning - all are roles of the teacher as seen by the developers of the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum.

IV. Implementing Curriculum

Implementing any curriculum presents difficulties, particularly in aspects such as "the change in knowledge and understanding of the new curriculum, and the change of role / behavior required to implement the curriculum." (Roberts, 1982, p. 100) In general, there seems to be a gap between teachers' and curriculum-developers' view of teaching:

Curriculum development has proceeded seemingly in isolation from the process of implementation. This isolation seems to occur as a result of developers focusing on the ideal and attempting to create a universal set of experiences for teachers and children. (Boag, 1980, p. 141).

Common (1982, p. 24) supports this view:

It was thought that a better idea, coming from the top of the system, the policy level, could be translated by expert designers into a curriculum that, when used by teachers, as intended by those experts, would change teaching behaviors into something better.

But Common (1982, p. 24) admonishes: "It is important to remember that all reform starts at the classroom level."

In fact, the development committee for the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum included not only two university professors and two drama supervisors, but also three teachers who could add their contributions from the perspective of the "classroom teacher". Bolster (1983, p. 297) stresses that teachers' knowledge of teaching appears to be situational, everyday, commonsensical: what works, at the time, in that particular situation, under the circumstances, as opposed to the highly-specialized, universal view of theorists.

The meaning of a curriculum emerges from the dialogue among the curriculum developers. However, there is often a gap between this intent - and how the curriculum is actually implemented into the classroom, according to the teachers' beliefs and level of comfort with the content or subject:

For teachers, implementation is an interpretive act. A teacher's perspective of the curriculum plan is grounded within the concrete and contingent classroom setting of "these children in my classroom." Interpretation of the curriculum depends upon the teacher's stock of knowledge and beliefs about how children learn, what society wants, what the future will be like and the teacher's understanding of the organizational context of their work (school policies, the administrative style of the principal, school district organization and regulations, various ministry directives, and so forth). The interpretive act is the effort by the teacher to fuse the horizon of the curriculum plan as text, with the horizon of teaching as a lived experience. (Aoki, et al., 1984, p. 20).

Because of the unique participatory nature of drama, teachers cannot fall back on a body of knowledge to teach from, as they can in other subject areas, if they have difficulty with the methodology involved. Also, because the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum is a new curriculum, teachers do not have a previous one for prior guidance.

When introducing a new curriculum, it is imperative that inservicing and follow-up consultation is provided to the teachers:

When teachers are left to use an innovation behind closed and separate classroom doors, without support structures, there is little likelihood of much change. That is, teaching practice will remain basically the same, and any new materials or techniques will probably be co-opted or adapted so that they look like the same old things and events. Curriculum implementation is more than the mailing out of a new curriculum to unsuspecting teachers working alone with their students. (Common, 1982, p. 24).

Crowther (1972, p. 170) found that in his study of the rate of adoption of the 1971 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum "teachers with university courses in the new social studies were significantly more advanced in adoption of the innovation than were teachers without such courses." One of his conclusions arising from the findings of his study was "that teachers respond positively to whatever assistance from change-agent personnel and inservice activities can be made available to them".

in their efforts to implement educational change." (Crowther, 1972, p. 169). Obviously, any prior experience in the subject helps in implementation.

This research study attempts to determine how teachers with varied degrees of experience or background in drama dealt with the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum - how these pilot teachers implemented the curriculum and their feelings about the whole experience.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

The very concept of drama encompasses all aspects of human nature: social, emotional, physical, intellectual, spiritual, so it was imperative that the methodology used for researching this area should be qualitative rather than quantitative. The researcher did not want statistical data, but wanted instead analyses involving in-depth insight into the unique, specific situation of the study.

Analysis of any kind involves a way of thinking. It refers to the systematic examination of something to determine its parts, the relationship among parts, and their relationship to the whole. (Spradley, 1979, p. 92).

The research methodology used in this study was ethnographic field work methodology: "the search for the parts of a culture and their relationships as conceptualized by informants." (Spradley, 1979, p. 93). Informants "variously called subject, respondent, or informant" (Agar, 1980, p. 1) are

members of the culture being studied who provide information to the researcher about their culture "in their own language or dialect" (Spradley, 1979, p. 25) thereby becoming "teachers for the ethnographer" (Spradley, 1979, p. 25).

One method by which researchers can elicit information from informants is through the use of ethnographic interviews so the researcher can "learn how informants interpret the world through which they move." (Agar, 1980, p. 90.) Spradley (1979, p. 58) suggests this explanation and guidelines for ethnographic interviews:

It is best to think of ethnographic interviews as a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants. Exclusive use of these new ethnographic elements, or introducing them too quickly, will make interviews become like a formal interrogation. Rapport will evaporate, and informants may discontinue their cooperation. At any time during an interview it is possible to shift back to a friendly conversation.

The three most important ethnographic elements are its explicit purpose, ethnographic explanations, and ethnographic questions.

1. Explicit purpose. When an ethnographer and informant meet together for an interview, both realize that the talking is supposed to go somewhere. The informant only has a hazy idea about this purpose; the ethnographer must make it clear. ... directing it in those channels that lead to discovering the cultural knowledge of the informant.

2. Ethnographic explanations. From the first encounter until the last interview, the ethnographer must repeatedly offer explanations to the informant. While learning an informant's culture, the informant also learns something to become a teacher.

3. Ethnographic questions. ... three main types ...

a. Descriptive questions. This type enables a person to collect an ongoing sample of an informant's language.

b. Structural questions. These questions enable the ethnographer to discover information about domains, the basic units in an informant's cultural knowledge. ... to find out how informants have organized their knowledge.

c. Contrast questions. The ethnographer wants to find out what an informant means by the various terms used in his native language.

In this study, the researcher used ethnographic interviewing methods to gain insight into the world of teachers piloting the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Entry

The informants in this study were six Central Alberta teachers who piloted the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum in the 1983-84 school year. Five of the teachers were not known to the researcher before the study. One was known - and indeed, was the impetus for this project. The researcher had known Norma Jean (pseudonym) when the two had gone to college together many years before. The researcher encountered Norma Jean at a provincial Drama Workshop in Red Deer which they were both attending in October, 1983 - the beginning of the year in which Norma Jean was piloting the drama curriculum. Norma Jean was at the workshop trying to gather ideas and guidance in the teaching of her drama pilot. She expressed her confusion and apprehension about the curriculum and the pilot project she was embarking on. Because she did not have a drama background, she felt at a loss for ideas and uncertain about how to tackle the curriculum. She felt that the one day of

inservice provided by Alberta Education^o for the Elementary Drama pilot teachers in September, 1983, was not enough to prepare her for the project. Norma Jean said that at the inservice meeting, the drama curriculum ad-hoc committee had gone through the new curriculum and given examples of teaching, but she felt she needed more information and background.

After this encounter at the drama workshop, the researcher did not forget this conversation, and wondered how other pilot teachers with limited or no drama background fared with the pilot program. Although the original intention was to interview teachers who had no drama background at all, this did not work out for the study, because the pilot teachers in the geographical area chosen for the project had varying backgrounds in drama. This will be illustrated in the section entitled Profile of the Respondents.

As stated in Chapter Two, there had previously been no Elementary Drama Curriculum in Alberta, so the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum which has just been developed was to be piloted - tested for responses and subsequent revisions and changes -

by a selection of teachers throughout the province. The researcher was informed by the respondents that representatives of school systems in Alberta had been contacted by Alberta Education regarding the drama pilot program and that these representatives had then approached various teachers in their school systems to see if they would be interested in piloting the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum. Some agreed: the minutes of the Drama Curriculum Committee meeting of June 2, 3, 1983, stated that forty-eight teachers throughout the province would be officially piloting the new Elementary Drama Curriculum in the coming 1983-84 school term.

The researcher contacted the central office of Alberta Education in Edmonton and obtained a list of teachers piloting the curriculum in the Central Alberta region. This area was selected because:

- 1) it was within travelling distance of the researcher (Red Deer and approximate 100 km / 60 mile radius); and
- 2) the researcher wanted to investigate how pilot teachers approached the curriculum "on their own" - without the guidance and immediate contact of specified drama consultants provided by cooperating school systems as are

available in major centres such as Edmonton or Calgary.

Data Collection

Nine teachers agreed to pilot the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum in the Central Alberta area. The researcher contacted all nine of the pilot teachers: first sending them a letter asking if they would consider being interviewed for the project, then visiting them in person at their schools to find out if they had decided to be part of the study. Six agreed to be interviewed, and three declined. The researcher sent letters seeking permission for the interviews to the teachers, principals, and superintendents, and permission was granted for the interviews to go ahead. The researcher contacted each of the six teachers in person to set up the time and location of each interview.

The interviews took place during the month of May, 1984 - at the end of the school year in which the teachers had piloted the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum. One interview for each respondent

was conducted. The interviews were conducted at the convenience of the respondents regarding location and time of the interview. The date, time, duration, and location of each interview is illustrated in the following chart:

FIGURE 2 - INTERVIEWS

NAME OF RESPONDENT	DATE OF INTERVIEW	TIME	DURATION (APPROX.)	LOCATION
Norma Jean	May 7	after school	120 min.	Norma Jean's classroom
Sue	May 22	after school	90 min.	Open hallway adjacent to Debbie's classroom
Debbie	May 22	after Sue's	45 min.	Open hallway adjacent to Debbie's classroom
Eileen	May 15	after school	80 min.	Eileen's classroom
Will	May 1	after school	80 min.	Will's classroom
Joe	May 9	evening	90 min.	Joe's home

All of the interviews were interrupted occasionally by phone calls, students, and teachers or other adults. One teacher requested the interview be done in his home, so this interview took place in the evening at his home and was interrupted by telephone calls, his family going in and out of the room, and by the family's dog. Despite the interruptions, the subjects (teachers who by nature of their profession are used to being interrupted constantly) were able to focus in on the questions and gave candid, in-depth responses.

The specific questions the researcher asked the respondents were:

1. How did you get involved with this pilot project?

2. What is your drama background and experience?

3. How many years have you taught?

4. What grade level are you piloting the project with; and how many students are in the classroom?

5. How did you deal with the curriculum? (ie.: Did you integrate drama or use it as a separate subject?)

6. How did you use the Curriculum Guide? What did you think of it?

7. What did you use for resources?

8. Did you get outside help for the project? (eg.: follow-up support?) Who?

9. How did you feel about the inservicing for the project?

10. Did your attitude toward drama change as a result of the pilot project?

11. Did other teachers come to you for assistance?

12. Did you feel pressured in your responsibility as a pilot teacher?

13. What would you say is the difference between drama and theatre?

14. Were you able to understand and apply the philosophy of the curriculum guide?

15. What would you say is your own philosophy of drama?

16. Do you feel more confident about teaching drama now?

17. Would you teach drama next year?

18. How would you teach drama another year?

19. How did you feel about the whole experience of being a pilot teacher? Would you do it again?

20. How did you feel about the experience of being a drama pilot teacher? How did you feel about the pilot project itself?

Occasionally, responses to one of the specified questions would include the answer to another question so this second question would not be asked because the researcher had already gained the appropriate information.

A good rapport was established between the researcher and each of the six informants, and the interviews went more smoothly than the researcher had anticipated. The communication flowed and the interviews ended by mutual consent when the researcher's questions had been answered; there were no more comments the respondents wished to make, and the discussion regarding the subject of the study had ended or shifted to other topics. The researcher and the respondents informally discussed the subject of drama in the classroom on other occasions, but these discussions were not tape-recorded or formally used for the study.

Data Analysis

The researcher gained permission from the respondents to tape-record the interviews, so each respondent's interview was audio-taped, then transcribed into a written document. The researcher then perused each respondent's transcriptions and pulled out all answers applicable to each of the general categories to be analyzed (from the Resource Questions, Chapter 1: eg.: resources, attitudes, drama background, etc.). Spradley (1979, p. 100) refers to this as a domain: "any symbolic category that includes other categories is a domain. All the members of a domain share at least one feature of meaning." Spradley (1979, p. 142) further states that "combined with ethnographic interviewing, ethnographic analysis leads to the discovery of a particular cultural meaning system."

As the researcher studied the data in the various categories, themes began to emerge in the form of threads of commonality among the subjects' responses (eg.: the respondents' concern about their lack of drama training, their desire for follow-up support with the project, etc.).

The interviews were then analyzed according to these themes or patterns arising from the subjects' responses.

Cultural themes are elements in the cognitive maps which make up a culture. Themes are larger units of thought. They consist of a number of symbols linked into meaningful relationships. (Spradley, 1979, p. 186).

Conclusions resulting from analysis of these themes are presented in Chapter Five.

Profile of the Respondents,

This section offers a profile of the six teachers who were interviewed for this project.

For background information, the researcher will present how many years of teaching experience each teacher had, what grade was being used in the pilot project, how many students were in each classroom, and whether the teacher chose to teach the drama as a separate subject or to integrate with other subjects will be explained. A description of the physical facilities used for the drama classes will also be discussed.

The six pilot teachers had varying degrees of involvement with drama. The researcher asked each of the interviewees to recount any drama courses they may have taken, prior experience teaching drama, and any other general involvement with drama they may have had.

For this section, the researcher will not make a distinction between drama and theatre, but will state the prior experience the participants had with drama of any kind.

a) Norma Jean

Norma Jean, an athletic woman in her mid-thirties, had a strong interest in sports and a background in high school social studies. She was in her seventh year of teaching, and was piloting the drama project with her home room of twenty-seven grade five students. The school was situated in a "bedroom community": a small town in very close proximity to a medium-sized city.

When Norma Jean was asked what her drama background was or if she had taken any drama

courses, she replied "absolutely zilch". she explained: "I've had no experience in my own schooling in any drama. I was never directed toward any kind of drama. I haven't got a course in drama."

I always attended for my personal enjoyment, theatre so that's where I have any interest. So there's a certain amount of enjoyment in aesthetic appeal for me and also an acknowledgment that there are a lot of good things that can come out of drama. I will acknowledge that. But my personal, I have absolutely no training whatsoever.

Because of her familiarity with Social Studies, Norma Jean did the drama as "mostly integration in the Social Studies," and "one particular time where it was a choral reading for Christmas and for Hallowe'en." Her drama sessions were basically confined to her own classroom.

Though an experienced teacher, Norma Jean felt that she had quite a few "problem students" in her class this particular year. -- that it was a "difficult" class.

Norma Jean was known to the researcher previously, and as was stated earlier in this paper, was the impetus for this thesis.

b) Sue

A petite, bubbly young woman, Sue was in her fifth year of teaching. The tiny school in which she was teaching in this particular year was located in a little village placed right in the middle of the prairie, totally surrounded by farms and almost an hour's drive from any major community. Three buildings dotted the school yard: on one side, the kindergarten; on the other side, a compact Junior high school; and in the middle, Sue's school where grades one to six were taught in three classrooms on the main floor of the building. Sue piloted the drama project with her grade three - four split class of thirteen students. She taught the drama in a carpeted room in the basement of the school - one which was used for the lunch room and had tables and chairs in it which the students moved at the beginning of each drama lesson:

... automatically the first, as soon as the door's unlocked, they're in there moving the desks, pushing them to the sides and stacking the chairs, and they get them all out of the way and then as soon as they're done, they sit down and wait for directions.

Sue's experience with drama went right back to "a bit from school yet: elementary, plays and Christmas plays and stuff like that. I always managed to get the lead role somehow. I can memorize very fast. And then in Junior High, I took a drama option."

Sue took more advanced studies as well: "And then at University, I took Children's Drama." She elaborated on this course: "This is strictly creative drama, and they got into movement, mime, improvisation, puppetry, a little bit of puppetry, and storytelling. It was very well basically what the curriculum guide covers." She also had "a lot of dance background."

The year before she piloted this drama course, Sue taught an evening adult drama class for the Continuing Education department in her community. She had eight adults enrolled and although she was

"a nervous wreck the first night", after that "we had a great time." In fact, the class was such a positive experience, that she wanted to give drama workshops to her colleagues: "I felt really comfortable doing it with the teachers in the county now after having done that."

Because of Sue's experience and background with drama, and her keen interest in it, she felt confident enough to present the drama as a separate subject and to integrate it:

It sort of blends in a lot, especially with language arts, like a lot of the components that were part of the drama, like the choral reading, and stuff like that -- I handle in my reading class. I don't do anything in my drama period -- I don't touch that at all. So basically when we went downstairs and did drama, that's when we did things like movement, mime, improvisation, stuff like that.

During the same time that Sue was piloting the drama project, so was her colleague and friend down the hall, Debbie.

Debbie

Like Sue, Debbie was also in her fifth year of teaching. And she, too, was a lively, energetic young woman hard at work teaching in this tiny community set against the backdrop of the wheat fields and grain elevators of Alberta.

Debbie was doing the pilot project with her grade one - two class of sixteen students. Her drama classes were scheduled into the carpeted room in the basement which contained no furniture except a piano and "a couple of cupboards along the walls."

Debbie had taken a half-credit course entitled "Teaching of Creative Dramatics" at Red Deer College because the year before the pilot program came out, they decided to teach drama in her school and she had a "teeny bit of background but not enough to teach a full year so I said I would take this half-credit course and it really got me started." She also "read a lot of books" on the subject. The course was "some practical, and some talking about it, and the difference between drama and theatre. And we learned a lot about Dorothy Heathcote, which I found really interesting. We had a speaker in about that."

Debbie explained how she was teaching the drama by saying she "was doing the integrated program, but I still have it an hour a week that I do it as a separate subject - two thirty-minute periods." She elaborated on her choice:

Well, I just chose, well, the sorts of things I would do, I suppose, were integrated because of their topic. They'd relate to things in class and instead of just doing, taking like a reading period and doing drama in it, I just saved the drama activity and do it in my drama period. Also, because I teach a split grade, nobody's ever on the same story at the same time - I have three different reading groups, so I'd pluck a story out of one of the groups, read it to everyone, and we'd do it in drama. It's really important, too, I think, for a split grade or for any class to do things together and not just always in groups.

d) Eileen

Out of the six people interviewed, Eileen had been teaching for the longest period of time: twenty-two years. Her forthright manner and straightforward answers seemed typical of so many of the independent people who had gravitated to this self-sustaining town nestled in the shadow of the Rockies. Eileen had taught many grade levels and

combinations of classes over her career, and in this particular year she had the strange schedule of teaching a grade two class each morning and a grade five class in the afternoon. The drama pilot was done with the grade five class of twenty-seven students.

The drama class was taught in the gym, or in the grade five room, which was fully-carpeted: "and I usually even tell them 'Take off our shoes', you know." There were desks in the room, but "the kids were trained. They knew right way when they had to move the desks, and usually when I got there at one o'clock they would have them moved."

Although Eileen taught the drama pilot as a separate subject, she felt that "next year, I would integrate wherever I could - it's so much more meaningful."

Eileen had agreed to do this pilot because she "used to teach drama as options in Junior High." She had "taken an awful lot of creative dance. Creative movement - my minor is in that, so I've done a lot of that. I've done a lot of movement and stuff because I used to teach a lot of Phys. Ed., so I took a lot of dance."

e) Will

Will's background regarding drama was totally different from any of the other five teachers interviewed for the project. This tall, bearded man had "been involved in theatre for twenty years, both at a professional and an amateur level." In fact, he interrupted his teaching career and "took twelve years off to be a freelance performer". At the time, he "was also writing television scripts and playing my violin in orchestras, and all sorts of things."

Altogether, Will had taught for twelve years. And although he was the only one of the six teachers interviewed who was teaching in a city school, he commuted each day to his home outside the city where he was a "gentleman farmer."

Although Will was teaching drama to grades three / four, four, five, six in this particular year, his target for the drama pilot program was a grade four class of twenty-nine students.

He taught the drama as a separate subject to the grade fours due to "timetabling constraints, but "he felt it would work better as "an integrated thing rather than as a separate subject."

The class was taught in his home-room which had a rug, but also contained tables and chairs so "the hassle is through always having to move furniture." He commented on this later in the interview as well:

I need the time to be able - in drama - the thing that's frustrated me most has been the physical setting here. So many of the creative, or developmental drama things that require a setting of atmosphere and so on, I haven't been able to do. I haven't the energy to set up because of the furniture - moving business.

f) Joe

Though Joe had lived in Canada for many years, this short, dark-haired man still had a trace of an accent from his native New York home. He felt this had hindered him from participating in community theatre productions, something he indicated he would like to do.

finger back at (the fine arts consultant) by saying 'Look at, I'm out here in the wilderness trying to survive and you in your cushy little office could have at least got us together - because that instills me to keep going.' I really felt that ... I couldn't keep my thoughts and my motivation going." She felt the fine arts consultant had "an obligation, a professional obligation - he didn't have to be in drama to facilitate other people involved with it getting together - he could facilitate it."

b) -In another vein, Sue, who had some prior drama experience, spliced her positive comments with negative comments:

The first meeting we all met was really well-planned, and they went through all the various components and did examples for us. It was all very well-organized and well-planned. I think they must have met prior to and decided who was going to take over what and ran through it and everything to make it smoother. But I know myself and I remember that day, like it really bothered me because I was just sitting watching. We were just sitting and we weren't really involved.

And I feel as a pilot teacher, you know, because they were asking us to teach drama I think they should have had us participating that day and doing drama. It was fine for me because I knew, I had experienced it before and maybe that's why I was feeling really gung-ho to be up there

with them. It really bothered me to sit there and watch. I mean it was well-done and I enjoyed it, but it was really upsetting that I couldn't be involved, that I had to sit and watch. And we were just all around sitting in chairs and they just went to the center of the room and started in, showing how a typical drama lesson should be set up, and how it should flow from one activity to the next. And they kept things moving really well, but to me, it looked polished - like, I could tell.

And then we discussed it. We'd get into small groups and we'd discuss it. And they would point out, you know, why they had done such and such an activity - you know, that was an example of improvisation. They all broke up and they all sort of led a little, a small group. ... I'm sure there were lots there where drama was a new experience to them and they were probably comfortable saying 'whew, thanks heavens, we didn't have to get up there and do anything'. Whereas I was very opposite. I just walked out of there saying 'oh, I wish that I could have been up there doing it too' ... I just feel, if we offered to pilot, and how else are we going to take over our class unless we experience it ourselves? They should have had us involved, and doing a lot of of it as participators. I think it would have been more beneficial to the teachers who haven't had any drama background ... I suppose this is why they chose not to because they felt it was just a one-day thing - everyone would be strangers and feeling inhibited. But I don't know, I don't think it would have taken too long to break the ice.

When asked if a one-day inservice was enough, Sue replied "for me, yes." She explained:

But I'm not sure I would say yes, it was for any of the teachers that were there. Drama was entirely new, and there were lots there, you know. I talked to quite a few of the ~~various~~ teachers that were there piloting and there were a lot that were really scared to do it ... maybe they should have had one more meeting or made it a two-day thing, two consecutive days in a row, and the second day had us up doing it and involved us.

When asked if she got any outside help for the project, Sue replied "No." Did she want any? "No, not really. I feel really comfortable with the drama." When asked if the fine arts consultant for this area helped, Sue replied "we don't have one." Then she said "Oh, you're talking the Regional." She explained "we don't see the regional office out here. I guess because (the county office) handles all their own and they do such a good job, really, with it that there's really no reason for regional office to." Did she ever feel the need to phone anyone for help? - "No." Although she didn't elaborate on this answer, Sue may not have required central office assistance for a number of reasons: she had a solid background in drama and had taught the subject before so she felt confident doing the pilot project. And she was able to discuss the project with her colleague Debbie, who was also piloting the drama curriculum in the same school.

c) When asked how she felt at the end of the day of the pilot teachers' inservice meeting, Debbie's prior experience with drama showed through in her responses:

It was very supportive of the sort of things that I'd been doing for a whole year in drama, and it was very introductory and I'd already gone through the introductory type of things, and I probably could have used some, how would you say it, in-depth or further sorts of things about drama - I guess in-depth, that's what I'm trying to say. And in my particular level, like I don't see that there's a whole lot of value in doing these upper elementary-junior high type things in drama, when I'm not ever involved in it, right now - like I'd rather concentrate on learning a lot more about what I'm doing. The one-day thing was just a real introduction, that was it. If I was going to have a day for me to be very selfish - I would have had more in-depth things at my particular level. And that's not what the day was meant to be. It was an introduction to the entire curriculum.

Debbie was asked if she had received any outside help with the project through the year. She replied "no." The fine arts consultant "hadn't been to the school once. If someone had come, if he had come out to give me some suggestions or watch my drama class or said 'you could be doing this', that

would have been nice. But I wasn't going to push it. I'm not the type that says 'rush out and see my class.' However, later in the interview, Debbie commented:

I really thought the fine arts consultant would be out to see what was going on, to see if I was having any problems or to see if he could give me any suggestions or improvements. I expected that that would happen at some point in the year, and it didn't. And I've had basically no contact with anyone since the day of the workshop back in September or October or whenever it was. So I've been very much on my own. I realized if I had been having problems, I could have phoned him, but ...

Did Debbie think the fine arts consultant could have helped: "I have no idea."

When Debbie was asked if she felt okay with what she was doing in the pilot, she answered "oh, yes, I've seen real growth in my students over the year." Debbie's prior experience teaching drama made her comfortable enough and astute enough to recognize this in her students.

d) Eileen had also taught drama before. When asked what she thought of the pilot teachers' meeting in September, she replied "It was very good." What did it do for her? "Well, I think that my concern was

how do you do this whole sort of thing? And they said you had to do so many sections, but you know, to not feel that we were forced to have to do everything that was in here - because everybody was worried about that."

She thought the day was "well-organized, and they had like a mini-workshop because there were people there who had never taken drama, have never been involved, and they were, sort of, had us do things in small groups. They would take a small group and they would present and work with you, so that we'd feel more comfortable. Some people were really uncomfortable." She surmised these were the people with no drama background: "You could tell because they hung back. It was very obvious."

At the meeting, they did mime and "a little bit of puppetry just with styrofoam cups. Just so people got the feeling that puppetry didn't have to be something it took months for you to make, because everybody said we had no time."

When asked if she had received any outside help from anyone, Eileen said "No." Did she feel she wanted any? "Not really." She "felt safe enough"

teaching drama: "I didn't find it th
uncomfortable. A lot of people feel really
uncomfortable with drama. They think you have to be
an actor and you don't."

e) Will had been an actor and was now teaching
drama. So how did he view the inservice day?

The workshop that we had in Edmonton last
September was tantalizing, you know. It
got us going. And then coming back to the
classroom, I really decided that I would
deal with the suggestion made that we deal
with one, at least one of the moving
aspects, the speaking aspects, and then the
combined things. That one workshop really
got me started.

However, Will felt the need for support:

But I really felt the need for more of that
kind of thing where we just, you know, it
was a very general sort of thing. If there
had been a workshop that dealt with
developmental drama, then I would've been
there, bang-o. The opportunities to talk
with other drama teachers and have more
workshops would have helped. I think I
really felt very isolated.

Will stressed that teachers "need to have a lot more
time to actually reflect on what we're doing."

f) Will had made just a few brief comments
regarding the inservice day, but Joe had many strong
opinions about the inservice meeting:

Well, I don't know, I may have been one of the few people that really wasn't impressed when I went up there and saw what they were doing. I mean some of it's good. Some of it seemed to me that they had pulled it together rather hastily and weren't quite convinced what they were doing - different types of storytelling and playmaking and dramatization. They went to all of these, I'm trying to think, like something like dramatization skills where the kids are thrown into a situation and they develop as they go - I find it very hard with the kids - if they have time to think about it and then go into it, they're able to - so I was just wondering if some of these things weren't hastily jumped into. They're nice ideas, but I don't think they gave us enough tools.

He continued:

The one-day inservice - I thought it was too much to cover in too short a time and I guess maybe there's an assumption there that people had an extensive background in drama. I don't know if that would be the assumption they had made, but it seemed to me that they skipped over a lot of things. They went through every one of those methods of teaching drama - and they look good when you go up there. And then you come back to your classroom and try to do them, and all of a sudden things don't seem so clear anymore. So I don't think I gave every one of those components a fair trial.

How did he feel at the end of the inservice day?

I think from an inservice you should feel excited and ready to go. And I left there with a little doubt, a little worried about where I was going with this and I was going to tackle this all together. I think it was too much to handle in one day. And then each one of those wasn't done in enough detail. I mean they asked at the end "Was everything okay," and you kind of sat back and said "yes, I guess so." But you knew that they had so many things to cover in that day, that if you slowed them down, you would never get to the last two or three so - do one or two and leave the other six off. Probably what they should have done was have a workshop in the beginning and covered the first half of the curriculum - might have done logically - and brought us back in together and asked us at that point "What kind of problems are you having?" so the rest of the program could have gone a little smoother.

Joe commented on the need for support:

I guess our coordinator, fine arts, he's not a drama specialist, and as a matter of fact, I've only seen him twice this year - the first time was up there and the second time he dropped into my school and I didn't even remember who it was. Anyway he dropped in and asked me how things were going and I said "well, not bad", and he got on the road again. So in terms of support - we didn't get much.

Joe would have liked to have met with the other pilot teachers:

I would have liked to see possibly one or two of the teachers come over to my class and see what I'm doing and said "look, I'm having trouble with this, what have you done with it?" Probably each one of us might have found the areas where we're very strong in and the areas we might have needed -- some encouraging -- the communication. There was no teamness to it. We were all kind of out there doing our own thing.

Joe's final comment seems to summarize how the pilot teachers felt: they would have liked some follow-up assistance with the project, even just for the moral support component -- someone to acknowledge that they were doing a special project in addition to their assigned curriculum, someone to give them some recognition, some advice, some guidance.

g) Summary. The six pilot teachers generally felt that the one-day inservice for the project was good, but that it was just not enough to prepare them for the whole year. And this came even from the teachers who had had drama backgrounds and/or experience teaching drama. More inservice time, visits from drama consultants/specialists, meetings with other pilot teachers to share ideas: these were all comments suggested by the interviewees which might have helped them in their year of piloting the drama curriculum.

III. Resources

In addition to the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, three books were recommended and given to each of the pilot teachers. An annotated bibliography supplied by the Ad-Hoc Committee which created the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum is provided here for each of the books:

1. Teaching with Creative Dramatics by June Cottrell (1975) balances theory with practical suggestions. It includes many activity suggestions suitable for structured dramatic play, dramatization, storytelling, and integration of drama with other subjects. It also includes many clearly outlined exercises, games and activities.

2. Learning Through Drama by McGregor, Lynn, Ken Robinson and Maggie Tate (1977) provides a basis for a more thorough understanding of the learning processes involved in drama and for the clear formulation of aims, strategies in the drama itself. It demonstrates how conscious assessment challenges students and teacher to deepen understanding and exploration of the process in which they become involved.

3. Drama Guidelines by O'Neill, Cecily, Alan Lambert, Rosemary Linnell and Janet Warr-Wood

(1976) has lots of ideas for beginning and sustaining group drama as well as a good section on teacher-in-role. It has a clear format with each teacher concern, e.g., planning, control, on a separate page for easy reference, and includes seventeen lessons for all levels.

Besides these three books, some of the teachers used other resources in teaching the drama pilot program. The six teachers gave their impressions of the resources they were given and others which were available.

a) Norma Jean sincerely wanted to gain some direction with the pilot project, so she ended up "reading on Saturday nights that orange book on drama: Teaching Creative Dramatics with June Cottrell." But again, when asked if she "personally had any resources for drama," because she had not been exposed to creative dramatics before, she answered "absolutely none." However, when Norma Jean went to the one-day inservice in Edmonton, one of the drama consultants "gave me some material, and that I used at Christmas time - Christmas choral speech, and sessions, that I used at Christmas time."

When questioned further about resources, Norma Jean explained:

I never looked at any of the glossaries or bibliography in the guide because past experiences have proven to me that they're not available, that by the time you do get them through whatever library source, you've lost interest. And I have to work within about two to three weeks. Okay, in two to three weeks I'm going to be studying such and such, or I know that later on here's this resource I gotta have now, and I spent four or five hours going through a lot of stuff from the library, searching out things. This was in about, shortly after the Edmonton time and knowing what I was teaching for the year and being able to pull out information there to use and say "okay, later on," and make a note to myself. But as far as looking at - no, I didn't and I wouldn't have looked - found anything of value by ordering a book out of somewhere or paying for it or going through the hassle. I wouldn't have done it. It has to be there. It has to be ready.

When asked where she would go for resources, Norma Jean said "I think I would look in other school jurisdictions, what they've got in their curriculum in drama, you know. and this is what they say here."

Regarding the "black, skinny, little, small printed book Learning Through Drama", Norma Jean thought it "was totally useless. It was very discouraging." She elaborated:

It had strategies that people had used for drama, and they, people, had gone in and watched, observations of drama lessons. I didn't get all the way through it. I put it down because I couldn't take it any longer. They gave very specific details as this is what the teacher did, and while the teacher was doing this, this is what the other kids were doing. And we have Henry and John didn't want to participate in this activity, so therefore they were over watering the plants or whatever and finally after so many minutes, the teacher brought the class back for the rest of the kids to discuss and how their feelings, or how to analyze what was happening in their groups or to what they were getting out of it, and John and Henry quit watering the plants and they came. And I thought, hey, I don't care to read about any kind of drama lesson where I don't have one hundred percent involvement, like I gotta make sure every kid is participating. I am not going to have kids blowing it for the other ones. So I have quite an authoritarian or rigid, and that's where I come from is that I believe that's not fair to the other kids, when we got a good thing going on.

Norma Jean's "rigid" views of the classroom may have prevented her from understanding an underlying principle of the drama curriculum, in which decision-making in the drama class is shared and the teacher's role is not necessarily to stand at the front of the room and dispense knowledge to a classroom of students sitting passively in their desks.

b) Sue, on the ~~other~~ hand, could understand the spontaneity of drama because the first thing she mentioned about resources was "I find the ideas just come from myself. I just think of various things to do." But of course her drama background and exposure to drama resources could have helped with this understanding:

There was some activities from my drama course at U of C that I could do with the kids. We had to keep a log when I was at the U of C. We had to keep sort of a diary everyday after our drama class. We had to write up how we felt doing such and such an activity. So it's really in there very thoroughly and I'll go back and read a certain day and it all comes back to me: "oh yeah, I remember doing that."

What else did she do for resources? "Some of the text books that had been assigned at the U of C. I would do, uh, Brian Way, I think that would be the most popular."

Regarding the "little black one" - "that was the first book we received (Learning Through Drama), so I started right into that the minute I got it. It was the first one to come. But it was way too advanced, like it was basically junior-senior high level. I think I got three-fourths through it, and

up to that point I hadn't gotten anything out of it. And there was really nothing in it that I could use with my grade three and fours. And then the other books came and I sort of set that one aside. And the Cottrell was excellent. It was really helpful. It had lots of ideas and suggestions in it."

But Sue stated "I don't think there's a lot of drama materials anywhere." And she felt that in the small community school she taught in "we don't have the resources the bigger schools would have. Our library is really very, very poor."

c) Being in the same school, this was the same library Debbie had access to. But her prior exposure to drama had provided her with an awareness of the resources available.

In her drama course at Red Deer College, for example, Debbie had "read a lot of books. As a matter of fact, I read the best text that they recommended on the pilot and it was, of all the books I'd read in my course, it was by far the best one. It was "Teaching with Creative Dramatics." I wasn't terribly impressed with the other two. But that one is very good."

Debbie's Red Deer College course gave her a foothold on resources: "We did a little work with masks, a lot of drama activities and games and things that you could use. And then everyone presented their project, and that took quite a while. I used my class - doing drama - video-taped them, created a drama lesson. And then I did my drama file as well." Besides her file and the June Cottrell book for resources, Debbie used "things that were going on in my classroom."

Regarding other places to get materials, Debbie recommended that "you can always become a better teacher. But you don't do it just by stagnating in a school. You have to get out and go to workshops and pick up ideas. And they're not always available to go to."

d) Like Debbie, Eileen had had exposure to drama resources from prior experience with it. When she was asked what she had used for resources, she said that she "had lots from before." She mentioned "the something - drummer, Beat of the Drummer" (probably A Different Drummer by David Kemp). As well, she said "I just go through some of the Nelson readers, or Bill Martin Jr. has some really good books which are even for choral reading. He has a lot of books

where the kids can narrate, like a lot of his stuff is in parts and stuff. He's got a whole series of different books (The Sounds of Language). It's got good ideas, like just this part alone gives the kids an idea to build a machine and everybody is a part. Like, I found this series - all of his books gave me good ideas - because he's quite into the creative arts, so any of these are good."

Did Eileen use the three books given for the pilot: "not very much." But she said "a teacher shouldn't run out of material - by using the guide book." She thought the guide provided ideas for teachers: "They give you material, like you could teach drama through this (the guide). I mean if you didn't have any books of your own, just this stuff, like they would, they give you enough ideas that you could be able to use like, poetry books or something and you'd be able to manage." She also mentioned Joyce Boorman's (professor, University of Alberta) work in creative dance: "I used a lot of her stuff and it works."

e) Like Eileen, Will had also used classroom materials for drama resources. For when asked about resources, Will said he used "some things I've done

in Language Arts classes over the years which fit very neatly into the curriculum. And since I was familiar with them and comfortable with them, I used them."

Although he thought the curriculum guide was "very good", Will felt that "in some of the strands that I've tackled, I've felt that I needed more specific resources, more specific lesson samples to use, and I think, you know, I've developed some, but not enough, you know." Will explained that "there's a lot there, and a lot that I'm feeling a little bit hesitant about, especially in the 'creative - start with nothing, build something' kind of drama. That's my weak point right now. And I feel as if there aren't enough - or at least - I haven't got enough experience or haven't seen enough actual lessons of that type to be able to go on, you know. I need more models, I guess."

Although he used the guide as "a starting point", "there were lots of times when I did dip back into things I had done before - in fact, frequently." For example, when doing a storytelling unit, he said "I have a series of books here called Childrens' Literature - Story and Verse for Children

- things like that which were some of my old things."

Will said he got his drama ideas "partly from the curriculum guide, partly, I don't know, one of the resources anyway, that were provided to us." For example, "the puppetry activity thing was specifically a warm-up thing in the curriculum guide, as I come to remember it."

When asked if he used any of the resources that were suggested for the pilot project, Will replied "oh, yes. I've been going through the Cottrell book bit by bit, trying to get a handle on the basic philosophy." He also discussed Learning Through Drama: "I guess in order to write this book they picked out all the neat things that have happened. And I find myself comparing the things that were happening in my classroom with what I'm reading in the book."

f) Lastly, Joe discussed the resources he used for drama:

I actually did buy one of the books, the reference books. I actually bought a series drama kit, resource material (by Seally). It's a binder, and it has, I guess, different situations, from a sole activity to a group activity to a situation. And I found that good because it sort of encompassed mime, it sort of encompassed dramatization, playmaking. And

it could be almost like readers' theatre, if you wanted to read something and have the kids act out.

I also have a tremendous book on stage make-up that I've been using for the last three years.

g) Summary. As was plainly evident in their comments, the pilot teachers liked the book Teaching with Creative Dramatics by June Cottrell better than the other two books which were recommended and given to them for the project. They found this book gave them practical ideas which they could use in the classroom, and was presented in an easy to read style and easy to follow format. The other two books appeared to be too impractical or just too difficult to follow.

Regarding resources in general, it appears that any background or prior teaching experience with drama, seemed to give the pilot teachers more of an understanding and insight into types of ideas and activities which could be incorporated into their drama lessons, and also provided an awareness of and accessibility to drama resources and materials.

None of the six pilot teachers interviewed mentioned the Teacher Resource Book, the supplemental section to the Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide which was given to them at the

inservice meeting in September, 1983, at the beginning of the year of the pilot. This section contained samples of lessons for each grade level in each of the areas specified on the continuum of the curriculum guide. Either the teachers didn't use the resource, or just made an oversight in neglecting to mention it in the interviews.

IV. Pilot Teachers Interpretation of Drama/Theatre

To appreciate the philosophy the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum is built upon, it is necessary to point out the difference between "drama" and "theatre".

Theatre has a production as its goal, is scripted usually by someone other than the performers, involves an audience as respondents, and is performance-oriented.

Drama can be used for performance, but the emphasis is on the spontaneous, creative component. It is a process-oriented, participatory, individuality-developing approach.

The Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide focuses on the creative dramatics approach: "Drama is for the classroom not the theatre." (Alberta Elementary

Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983). But it also acknowledges that "the self-development and socialization processes of the student are extended by developing an appreciation of theatre as an art form." (Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide, Pilot Edition, 1983, p. 1).

The six teachers interviewed for this study discussed their philosophies regarding the difference between drama and theatre and indicated which approach - "creative dramatics" or "theatre" - they had focused on in piloting the drama curriculum.

a) Norma Jean felt there was a "tremendous difference" between drama and theatre. She specified:

I think theatre is the end product of years of learning specific drama skills and I think they did a wonderful job in outlining it (in the curriculum guide). It was very helpful for me to look at developmental, as kids get older, they have different levels of developing, that I think in the schools because they've had no drama is that they've missed out a lot of very important parts of their development, sequential development, that may be needed for the drama.

Norma Jean's understanding of drama was "someone who can read a story and hold my attention is

dramatic, is using dramatic skills if they can, even if for reading - you know how your kids are just glued - that's a skill - even if you're reading. But that's not necessarily theatre."

Relating this to what she tried to do in her drama class, Norma Jean said "The idea, for example, the grade sevens and eights have a drama option and the final thing at the end of January, at the end of their option, is to put on a play, and to me it stinks. And really if that's all they've done is to work toward that play, they haven't gained a lot of drama skills. So the kinds of things I've been looking at in my class have nothing to do with acting. Some of it was reading a play we did. We were quite involved with reading of one play."

From Norma Jean's comments, the researcher suspects that she really did not understand the difference between theatre and creative dramatics. Her observations regarding drama skills being exemplified through children "glued to someone reading to them" and her citing of her drama experiences with the class consisting of "reading a particular play" are actually more audience /

performer related than the spontaneous, parallel participation concept of creative dramatics.

b) In contrast, Sue was able to focus right in on the difference between the two concepts, from information she had most likely gained from the university classes in which she had studied creative drama:

The theatrical part of drama, the whole idea is that you're performing to an audience, and it's usually memorizing, involves memorizing a script as well, whereas creative drama there is no audience and you're entirely on your own, like there's no script. It's all your own doing.

In Sue's university drama class, the instructor had "really stressed the fact that kids should not be put on the stage and asked to perform for an audience, and this is the whole idea of creative drama - that they do it at their own level, they don't do it for anyone in particular. But Sue commented:

I'm in disagreement there. I find the kids are real keen and eager to get up on stage. It doesn't bother them at all, and we don't push. If there's a kid that "oh, no, I don't want to go up on stage in front of all those adults," then fine, you know, we don't make any big do of it. But the majority of kids want a role, and they want to be on stage.

I feel the kids can handle a stage and performing and I don't feel it hurts them any to experience that. Like, I think it's good for them to have to go through that. Kids have a lot more nerve than adults do. I think it's harder, much harder to do it as an adult than to do it as a kid. And I think if they've done it as a kid, then it'll be that much easier, you know, the older they get to go out on stage and perform on stage.

Sue didn't mention why she thought it was good for adults to "perform on stage" but her conclusions may have come from the community adult evening drama class she taught and the response she had gotten from the adults who had participated in the production.

c) Debbie had also had university courses dealing specifically with the study of creative drama. So her response to the difference between drama and theatre was: "Drama is not performed in front of people, and theatre is. That's basically the difference. There's an audience or there's not an audience."

Which did she use in her own class? "Oh, drama, definitely." She explained that "the only theatre we do is Christmas concert and the musical in the spring. That is very anti - the whole theory of drama", but she rationalized "I don't know, I

thought about it a little while and I don't think there's anything terribly bad about getting kids up on stage either, especially if they want to be there." Regarding the Christmas concert, she explained "nobody is by themselves on stage unless they say they want to do it and they are enjoying it. We don't pick some shy, timid kid who it's going to scare them to death, and give them a part unless they want it."

Debbie and Sue had both commented that they felt that performing on stage was not detrimental to children. This response obviously came from their investigation and response to the presentation of creative dramatics in their university classes, in which creative drama is approached as spontaneous, with everyone in the class participating, whereas theatre consists of people performing a scripted piece for an audience. The new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum deals with creative dramatics, but also recognizes theatre as an art form to be appreciated by children in order that they might partake of its aesthetic qualities.

Discussing her own drama class, Debbie indicated "I think it's more important to talk about how they

felt when they were doing it than to show someone else. And with the younger ones, I don't really push that aspect unless they say 'Let's show it to the other ones.' I'd rather say 'okay, let's sit down and talk a little about it. How did you feel doing such and such?' Debbie had really captured the importance of "debriefing" in creative drama: discussing what has happened in the drama activity, talking it through to gain some insight into the situation.

d) When Eileen was asked to explain the difference between drama and theatre, she replied "For me, theatre is a more polished form of expression, and drama is not polished. It's not rehearsed."

Her approach with this pilot program went to "non-rehearsed" "because I felt they needed a little bit of experience and they just hadn't had it." In her class, the students performed "for each other - not for anyone else."

Eileen was pleased with the curriculum guide regarding "the goals for each child - because I think they are really trying to focus on each child, and the child developing themselves totally, and that to me is what drama is. It's not that this

one's a good actor or this one. It's what the child gets from it, like a self-awareness. So that's pretty well what I really tried to use in grade five." Eileen's prior experience teaching drama may have made her more comfortable with the creative dramatics.

e) By his own admission, Will's professional experience in the theatre may have colored his perception of drama, for when discussing his background as a professional actor, he mused "I'm not sure that that's altogether helpful in terms of the drama curriculum because sometimes I've found myself fighting the actor-director syndrome, and not really coming to grips with what drama can do in the classroom. And they're two, although they're related, they are separate entities."

He felt his background as an actor "doesn't always help with what the curriculum is aiming at, although I feel very comfortable in directing kids and trying to get them, you know, in scripted situation, to do different kinds of things."

Will found "with the children as well - they have trouble distinguishing. When you say drama to them, they immediately think 'oh, goody', we're

going to put on a play'. And trying to get into some of the more abstract points of drama, like developing their ability to handle different emotions and do role-playing which is not going to end up in a performance. They find that quite foreign to them. Now that may be because in this particular school, any time there has been an event, we have tended to put on a play or created a play for." Will continued:

I'm glad to see the drama curriculum is coming along to show us how broad the whole thing can be, but I'm having difficulty coping with it in lots of ways. Applying the straight drama part divorced from theatre - that's where I'm having trouble.

In a sense, it almost implies that every classroom teacher ought to have a background in drama in order to use it effectively. It would also probably get me out of making performances, making performers out of the kids, which I think is an important aspect. The kids who have been in our spring shows and have done the performing in our school have tons of self-confidence they might not otherwise have. But I think there's a lot of kids who are being left out because they're not getting opportunities to get up and do their stuff in a small, you know, without feeling they have to perfect it for performance.

Will's comments indicated that he was constantly trying to come to grips with how his experience in

theatre affected his understanding of the concept of creative dramatics.

f) When Joe was asked which approach he used in drama class, he said he "definitely took more of a creative drama route."

I think we did some theatre in terms of we did perform for our peers, but that was such a small component of it. We really went to the creative side: how much can you develop something? How much fun can you have doing it? And can you take something ordinary and make it into something extraordinary?

In the drama class, if they "got to the point where the kids were feeling they wanted to show the rest of the class, this basically came from mutual agreement. I would say 'would you like the rest of the class to see it?' And if they felt really good about, sure, they did, you know."

Regarding drama in schools, Joe expounded:

Performance-oriented. That's what we are - performance oriented. And I think that's the caution in drama that I don't think the performance has to be of a quality that we're looking at giving a nine, a ten; a hundred, a twenty. But I think the end result is that we give them some kind of goal to strive toward and basically, if they come anywhere near that goal, we should be happy. If they understand what that is all about and they grasped something from it, then that's all we can really ask for - individual and group goals.

g) Summary. All of the six teachers seemed to be aware of some kind of a difference between drama and theatre, but their own background in drama and amount of knowledge regarding the concept of creative dramatics had a definite bearing on their understanding of the distinction between the two.

V. Were the Pilot Teachers Seen as Resource People by Their Colleagues?

Before interviewing the teachers, the researcher assumed that as the pilot teachers' colleagues became aware that there was someone on staff who was involved in this new project, they would seek advice and guidance from the pilot teachers regarding the teaching of drama in their own classrooms. Surprisingly, this was not the case with the six teachers interviewed. In almost every instance, when the pilot teachers were asked by the researcher if someone on staff had sought advice from them, the answer was either emphatically "no" or comments indicating "no."

a) When Norma Jean was asked if she was seen as a resource person by her peers, she replied "oh, definitely not" and added no further explanation.

b) Sue mentioned that "the grade five/six teacher has occasionally asked for ideas - like you know, 'I have drama today - what can I do with my kids?' Or 'give me some suggestions.' Or if something works out really well or the kids have really enjoyed it, I'll usually tell her about it so she can try it with her kids if she wants to."

c) Debbie just answered "no - it's only a staff of five, and two out of five don't teach it so I'm probably not a reliable whatever."

d) Regarding the drama pilot, Eileen said "no, they never really talked about it. Most people just said it just freaks them right out." And she mused "I think workshops are what we need. I think it's just thinking if you've never had a course, but even if you've never had a course, you can still do this type of thing."

e) Will answered "no, uh, no, just about everybody on staff tries a little drama of the performance type at one time or another, some more than others. And the Christmas concert was one of those Christmas concerts where every class contributed something. The only reason they came to me was because I was coordinating the whole thing, and if we had two

'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer' acts, then I had to sort that out, you know."

f) Joe replied "noooooo - because I was the only one doing drama in that, in the elementary level. I mean the only drama they do is when they do their Christmas concert, and in a lot of cases, you can call it drama if you like, but it's just singing carols in some cases with some very, very pre-set skits, kind of thing, out of Home and Garden magazine, nice little skit or play. So basically no, they all thought it was great that it was being done. The language arts teacher in grade five/six thought it was terrific and that it was being done. I think if she wasn't a resource room teacher, she would have loved to have done it herself."

g) Summary. Five out of the six teachers said they were not sought out for advice as a result of their involvement as a drama pilot teacher. The researcher found this surprising and disappointing, but perhaps Eileen's comments regarding her colleagues' perception of drama summarizes it best: "Most people just said it just freaks them right out." Perhaps this typifies the attitude of many (most?) teachers toward drama.

VI. Attitudes

This section will deal with the six teachers' attitude toward drama, their attitude toward the pilot project itself, and if their attitude toward drama changed as a result of this pilot project experience. They were also asked whether they felt pressured in their responsibility as a pilot teacher, and if they would be involved in another pilot again.

a) Regarding the value of drama, Norma Jean commented that "there's a certain amount of enjoyment in aesthetic appeal to me, and also an acknowledgment that a lot of good things can come out of drama - I will acknowledge that."

Due to her lack of drama background, Norma Jean felt disappointed in her teaching of the drama: "I'm sure I had wonderful opportunities to demonstrate a drama technique or skill, or to incorporate something in there as a really good learning - but I never saw it. It escapes me."

However, when asked if she thought her students enjoyed the drama, she replied "My idea would be if I turned around and asked them if they wanted to do

it, again, would they have done it? - they probably say yes."

And she did feel the piloting experience was valuable: "The only thing I was looking at is that I came further this year than if I hadn't done it. So I see it's valuable to me to have piloted this project, because I came further in drama. I'm more aware of trying and experimenting with it and being forced to do it."

When asked if her attitude toward drama changed as a result of the pilot project, Norma Jean answered "not particularly - I was positive about it before."

It's a positive thing to have. I wouldn't say that I became more confident as a result of this, I just pushed myself. I did accomplish more through drama, by doing drama. I was more aware of drama skills, but I wouldn't say that I would write home to mother about how this curriculum inspired me. But I'm disappointed in that I never achieved as much as I could have - for various reasons, which I, I'm not going to make excuses for, they just happened to be."

When asked if she felt pressured in her duty as a pilot teacher, Norma Jean said "oh, definitely."

She "wouldn't have read the book on Saturday night. I kept saying 'my gosh, look what I'm doing for this project.'"

Would she pilot something again: "Not drama." Something else? "Oh, yeah, I think it's challenging. It starts, it makes you look a little more clearly at what you're doing and how to do things."

b) When asked if she felt pressured by her responsibility as a pilot teacher, Sue replied "not really." When asked about her feelings about the whole experience, she commented that "the idea that the materials were late in arriving really upset me, because I was around all the month of August, and was really eager to see the materials and I would have started reading them, whereas with them not coming till the end of September and you're back into teaching and you come back tired after a day of teaching."

Regarding the value of drama, Sue said

I just have seen the good things that have come about from drama, from what I've experienced from my university, from the adult drama that I taught, - just the closeness that you get with each other from it. It develops concentration. You learn to relax and I think that's important today in today's society because there is so much tension and you know, people are usually very, very tense. And I think it's good if

you can sort of relax for those few minutes. Imagination - it stirs the imagination. It's very creative. It's fun. Knowing the way kids love it, like if I look at the kids and think what the kids are getting out of it. Like I sort of feel like the kids, I know, see it as a fun course, a fun subject, and there's no pressure involved, like there's no pressure like there is in your core subjects. It definitely, I think, brings them closer together as a class and there too, like having a split grade, like there's friction between the two grades. You have two grades and you have a younger grade and older grade. And I think drama helps there, because all of a sudden you don't have grades."

Asked if she felt any different about teaching drama now, Sue replied "no, because I was doing drama last year even before the guide was out."

c.) Was Debbie pressured in her responsibility as a pilot teacher? I didn't really do anything differently than I had done the year before, you know. I did what I could do, and I didn't feel pressured because the pilot is so open-ended - do as much or as little as you want."

Debbie described drama as "a way of developing an individual's potential, and it's not an academic potential. It's more of an emotional potential that is really often neglected in our schools."

And I feel really positive about doing drama because I've seen kids that don't succeed, so many times, in things like math and reading - you take them down and you do drama and they just shine. And it's

something they just love. And it's something positive for them about school, and it will make them feel positive about themselves; and it's another type of enrichment for students."

When asked if she would do a pilot again, Debbie answered "I don't know if I would or not, because when it came time to do the report, it was very boring and sort of hard. A lot of the questions were hard to answer, and I didn't really enjoy doing the report, and it's funny because I was doing drama, whether I was piloting it or not."

Regarding her whole experience as a pilot teacher, she commented: "There was really nothing to it. You get two nice days in Edmonton, lots of good expense money, and I was already doing it anyhow. I didn't have to go out of my way in any way."

d) Eileen felt that "drama is helping the child build his self-awareness of themselves and the world around them, and where they can fit in. And I think it really helps you become more aware of others, their feelings. You become more sensitive through drama. So that's what I found from taking drama - that I became much more sensitive towards people and the environment." Seeing what drama can do in the educational system, Eileen said "I think that"

literature and poetry just become so alive with the kids. I think it really helps kids be better writers and readers and everything."

Eileen felt the relaxation exercises in drama were a way "to sort of clear your mind and get your body sort of fresh to move or to think or whatever."

The kids, if they could relax just a little bit when they come in - because a lot of times they're mad because there's been a fight, they've lost the soccer game, or someone pushed them and they're real cranky. And I think if they could just come in, lay down on the floor, have someone take them here and there, let your fingers relax. Then we would stretch and all types of movement and I would like, in about five minutes, they would go to their desks. There's no more hollering."

Eileen said "no" to the question of being pressured as a pilot teacher. She explained that the Regional Office said 'don't get upset about it. Do what you can in it because of the short type of notice.' And I was having all new subjects so, you know, I just felt I'd do the best with it and not worry."

e) Will, on the other hand, said "yes", he "felt that obligation" as a pilot teacher. "There have been times when I've felt the pressure of everything, not just this." But he viewed the pilot

experience "as an opportunity to find out what was going on and to see how I might handle it. I think any new experience is kind of fun. It can be a little terrifying, too, but I looked on it as an opportunity more than anything else."

Had his attitude toward drama changed through this experience?

I'm not sure that it changed. I think I understand it a little better now. I didn't have a clue about before and I think I'm beginning to understand a little broader implication of it. I'm not able to handle it effectively yet. Given time, I might be able to. I feel far more confident in the things that I was confident in before. I feel as if I'd like to take another crack at the things that I'm not quite so confident at. I think I would structure things a lot differently.

f) When Joe was asked if he felt pressured because of his commitment to pilot this project, he commented:

I think I went in with my eyes open that we were trying something brand new in that it hasn't been done on an organized basis before. And I never had the feeling I wanted to opt out - maybe that could be a problem - but I never experienced that. I enjoyed what I was doing. I mean every day wasn't great, but overall, when I look back on the year now, all I can think of is good things.

And I didn't have any pressure in terms of I had to perform so much. I even remember up at the inservice that they even said "You don't have to cover every one of them, just try to get a good number of them in." So I didn't feel any kind of performance pressure, or any kind of "I gotta get so much done." I think if I would have been on my own, and had been failing on my own miserably, I might have been a little worried - in my own terms - if I wasn't satisfied with the way things were going, if I didn't feel like I was getting anywhere and accomplishing things, ... didn't have a lot of communication, I might have felt like the hands-up kind of thing.

I have very high standards for myself. I know when I'm doing things well. ... Secondly, I don't take on something I don't think I can handle. When I went into this pilot, I knew it was something I was interested in, that I was going to succeed in it because I wanted to. I was interested in the area to start with. I think that was a big component of it, to help me decide to get into it, and again, I guess I gauged success with failure, if you like to use those terms, I don't like to but, on what was happening in the classroom. If the kids were coming back 'awww, we have to go to drama again', I would have felt pretty bad, would have felt I'm not getting through. But I felt most of the times the kids were really enjoying themselves. You know, when you walk in there, and feel like forty minutes have gone by in ten.

When asked if his attitude toward drama had changed, Joe said:

Well, I think one of the things it did was certainly tell me a lot of things I didn't know, that I have a lot to learn about the

rudiments. When you haven't had a lot of experience in drama, of course you were involved in it, but you didn't take courses in it or do much in the area of workshops, and you didn't realize there were a lot of, you just take it for granted, and you didn't realize the components were all there. So I think what it did is, actually what's going to happen is I am going to take a few workshops in drama because of it, and I think there's a lot more to learn now, and I'm more excited about it kind of thing, and I think I am overly impressed.

Joe commented on the value of drama in the classroom:

I didn't expect the grades fives to do as well as they are, and I've seen something in creativity I haven't experienced in other areas. I guess it's a thing you don't see every day in the traditional - I mean I've taught grades six and grade five regular classroom, and you just don't see that unleashed all the time - here's a perfectly acceptable place to do it, and some of the kids are just astounding, just astounding.

g) Summary. The six teachers all indicated they had positive attitudes toward drama before, during, and after the pilot project. Those without a previous drama background seemed to be struggling with an understanding of the curriculum and the intent of creative dramatics, but they still regarded the pilot project as a valuable experience. They also realized the potential of

drama as a valuable subject in the curriculum -- they could see how it could contribute to enhancing students' self-confidence and awareness of themselves and others. ✓

VII. Recommendations for Change

This final brief section presents changes the pilot teachers would make in their approach to teaching drama in another year (asked first if they would indeed teach it at all), as a result of their experience in this pilot project. It also presents their recommendations for change regarding the curriculum itself.

a) Asked if she would teach drama again, and how, Norma Jean replied "yes - because I think that you can put it into language arts. I wouldn't teach it ever as a separate course, but I would always look at trying to integrate, as to do more of the, experiment with, challenge myself, in an integrated"

b) Sue indicated that she would teach drama next year. What changes would she make? "I think I'm at the point, like even this year I found like even last year I did basically the same components that I redid

this year - the mime, improvisation, movement sort of thing, and I think I'm at the point where I'm ready to get into different avenues."

c) Would Debbie teach drama next year? "Oh, yes." She indicated she would teach it the same as she had been "unless somebody comes up with some great new ideas or tells me what I'm doing is not really right."

d) Eileen said, she, too, would teach drama next year, but stressed that it would be "integrated":

I think if I have grade five Social next year, I'll really work a lot of drama into that, so the kids can really feel what it was like, you know, what it was like to clear the land. I would integrate wherever I could. It's so much more meaningful. Integrate your art, everything. I think you make far more impression on kids with integration, I really do. You don't need a separate time, but I think it's more meaningful if you integrate, far more meaningful. It's always the time.

e) Another year, teaching drama, Will would "structure things a lot differently".

I've come to the conclusion that I think the drama curriculum will work better as an integrated thing, not as a separate subject. Because I can see all sorts of things that I could have done in my language arts program that relate to it. I can see possibilities in the problem-solving area in math that could be approached through drama. I don't know how you'd do it, but if for instance, I was designated the drama teacher (next

year) if there was some way to integrate me into the language arts program - more liaison with the language arts. There are lots of opportunity for drama kinds of activity. It would be easier to integrate it with the language arts than with social studies.

Will also thought the drama things would work beautifully in a team-teaching situation where the teachers could kind of bounce, you know, one could be an observer one time and say, 'hey, well, we tried but it didn't work. Let's turn it around.' I just felt the need for more, I guess the word is collegial support - somebody to be there watching and you know, helping. It would have given you a change to bounce your ideas off that person, too."

For changes regarding teaching drama, Will thought "it would be nice to get together with a bunch of teachers and go through some of the exercises that we expect the kids to go through. That would be the most valuable thing I could think of."

f) Regarding change, Joe thought there could be advantages "to having the drama integrated into language arts because you do have the flexibility. You can all of a sudden take a great theme or thought from the curriculum or lesson and delve

right into it. And I could see that there would be a lot of good things going on if you did it integrated. The only thing you'd have to be careful with in integration is that you don't ignore the drama. You can tend to forget that that's a component."

g) Summary. The researcher found it encouraging that all six of the pilot teachers said they would teach drama again in another school year. Those teachers that recommended changes felt that integration would be the way to go. Four of the six pilot teachers said they would approach it from an integrated method, and could see the potential integrating it with a variety of subjects. They mentioned language arts mainly, but also social studies, math, art. This supports the ad-hoc curriculum committee's recommendation to let teachers have the option of teaching the drama as a separate subject or integrated into other subject areas.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, REFLECTIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR
FURTHER RESEARCH

Summary

This study examined the responses of teachers with varying backgrounds in drama to the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum they pilot-taught during the 1983-84 school year. Six pilot teachers from the Central Alberta area were interviewed for the study in May, 1984; the end of the school year in which they had done the pilot program.

Reflections on the Study

During the inception of this study, the researcher had originally wanted to interview teachers with limited or no background in drama. However, as was stated earlier, this was not possible because of the availability of pilot teachers in the specific geographical area chosen for the study. Upon examination of the findings of the study, this proved to be beneficial. The respondents provided such a variety of backgrounds

in drama, that although the small sample restricted generalizability, contrasts and similarities were most certainly evident in the teachers' responses. This provided a substantial breadth to the in-depth study.

Specific points of focus resulting from the interviewees' responses will be presented in this chapter. Before breaking into specific points, however, the researcher will present the one overriding general theme which seemed to permeate the study.

1. Previous Drama Background

The overriding theme which emerged from the responses was how the amount and type of past experience the teachers had with drama affected practically every aspect of their perception and involvement with the drama pilot program. Sue and Debbie had taken specific university courses in creative dramatics. When examining their transcriptions, the researcher observed that many of their views paralleled the philosophy of the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum.

At University, I took Children's Drama. ... This is strictly creative drama, and they got into movement, mime, improvisation, puppetry, ... and storytelling. It was very well basically what the curriculum guide covers. (Sue).

Debbie had taken a course at Red Deer College entitled "Teaching of Creative Dramatics" which was "some practical, and some talking about it, and the difference between drama and theatre. ... It really got me started." Although none of the respondents was a novice teacher (all had taught a minimum of five years), it appeared that through Eileen's lengthy career as a teacher (twenty-two years), she had been able to glean many ideas for teaching drama from other subject areas, university classes, workshops, and from teaching drama before, which affected her comfort with the drama pilot:

I used to teach drama as options in Junior high. ... I've taken an awful lot of creative dance. Creative movement - my minor is in that, so I've done a lot of that. ... (teaching drama): I didn't find it that uncomfortable.

By his own admission, Will's unique background as a professional actor caused him to reflect upon his vacillation between drama and theatre: "applying the straight drama part divorced from theatre:

that's where I'm having trouble. ... I feel very comfortable in directing kids and trying to get them, in scripted situation, to do different kinds of things." But he was open to ideas: I think any new experience is kind of fun. It can be a little terrifying, too, but I looked on it (the drama pilot) as an opportunity more than anything else."

Joe had not had a great deal of drama experience, but whatever he had done involving drama, he seemed to have done with much enthusiasm: he "rewrote 'A Christmas Carol' for our school"; his Junior High class "did the Canadianized version of the Mikado"; he "coordinated" a mime workshop for his students. And he had a desire to learn more about drama:

I think one of the things it (piloting drama) did was .. tell me ... I have a lot to learn about the rudiments. ... I am going to take a few workshops in drama because of it, and I think there's a lot more to learn now, and I'm more excited about it, and I think I am overly impressed.

And finally, in complete contrast to the other five teachers, was Norma Jean. Her lack of exposure to drama seemed to affect almost all aspects of her perception and involvement with the drama pilot:

So if you've had no background in drama, you've had no training in drama, how are you to be innovative, to suggest neat little ways to bring this skill in at this time, and the kids would like it? ... It was something that I always had to keep reminding myself that I never did it before, that this is very threatening to me personally, because I don't know what I'm doing.

From the teachers' comments, it appeared that those who had had specific university courses in drama felt more comfortable teaching the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum. Discussion concerning Will's comment that "it almost implies that every classroom teacher ought to have a background in drama in order to use it effectively" might be considered by Faculties of Education when preparing university students for their entry into the world of teaching.

Keeping this general theme regarding the six pilot teachers' extent of exposure to drama in mind, findings regarding specific areas of the study will now be presented:

2. Inservicing for the Project

Although they generally seemed to enjoy the one-day inservice for the project, the pilot teachers did not seem to feel that one day was

enough to sustain them for the whole year of piloting the project, especially the teachers who had not had prior experience with the concept of creative drama. Some comments which the teachers made illustrate this point:

For someone like myself who had nothing in drama, they were way beyond me. I felt very much out of line. I felt like when I had gone to music workshops in that I'm sitting here saying "Why am I here?" (Norma Jean).

I really felt the need for more of that kind of thing where we, just, it was a very general sort of thing. If there had been a workshop that dealt with developmental drama, then I would have been there, bang-o. (Will).

The one-day inservice: I thought it was too much to cover in too short a time and I guess maybe there's an assumption there that people had an extensive background in drama. ... You come back to your classroom ... and all of a sudden things don't seem so clear anymore. ... I think it was too much to handle in one day. ... Probably what they should have done was have a workshop in the beginning and covered the first half of the curriculum - might have done logically - and brought us back in together and asked us at that point "what kind of problems are you having?" so the rest of the program could have gone a little smoother. (Joe).

The teachers who had exposure to creative drama wanted further aspects in inservicing:

The one-day thing was just a real introduction, that was it. If I was going to have a day for me - be very selfish - I would have had more in-depth things at my particular level. (Debbie).

It really bothered me because I was just sitting watching. ... They should have had us participating that day and doing drama. ... Maybe they should have had one more meeting or made it a two-day thing, two consecutive days in a row, and the second day had us up doing it, and involved us. (Sue).

The teachers' comments seemed to indicate a need for inservicing which might provide the basic rudiments and an explanation of the intent and philosophy of the curriculum, especially for teachers without a drama background. Generally, the teachers felt that the one day of inservicing for this project was valuable, but it was only a start. When teachers like Norma Jean, Will, and Joe, who lacked courses in creative drama, were not provided with enough inservicing to sustain them throughout the pilot program, it really did not seem fair to these teachers ~~or~~ their students, or conducive to the success of the program. "Curriculum implementation is more than the mailing out of a new curriculum to unsuspecting teachers working alone with their students." (Common, 1982, p. 24). The teachers' comments indicated they would have welcomed more inservicing for the project.

3) Follow-up Support

In the same vein as the teachers' desire for further inservice was their plea for follow-up support with the project, whether through visits from consultants or in the form of get-togethers with other pilot teachers. Following is a sample of the requests for follow-up support made by some of the teachers interviewed:

(referring to the fine arts consultant):
You in your cushy little office could have at least got us together - because that instills me to keep going. I couldn't keep my thoughts and my motivation going.
(Norma Jean).

The opportunities to talk with other drama teachers and more workshops would have helped. I think I felt very isolated.
(Will).

(suggesting other pilot teachers could visit his class, then discuss the project): Probably each one of us might have found the area where we're very strong in and the areas we might have needed some encouragement - the communication. There was no teamness to it. We were all out there doing our own thing. (Joe).

(regarding the fine arts consultant): He dropped in and asked how things were going and I said "Well, not bad" and he got on the road again. So in terms of support - we didn't get much. (Joe).

Even though Debbie could go to Sue, her friend and colleague teaching the drama pilot in the same school, for consultation, she also mentioned:

I've had basically no contact with anyone since the day of the workshop back in September or October or whenever it was. So I've been very much on my own. (Debbie).

Follow-up support can be provided for pilot teachers in many forms: through visits and discussions with Alberta Education consultants or local School Board office specialists, frequent inservices, meetings with fellow pilot teachers, workshops, peer inservicing, or a combination of any of these. As Crowther (1972, p. 169) concluded from his study of the rate of adoption of the 1971 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum: "Teachers respond positively to whatever assistance from change-agent personnel and inservice activities can be made available to them in their efforts to implement educational change." Consistent follow-up inservicing can be used to train teachers in the curriculum being piloted, and to sustain them with moral support throughout the project.

As the respondents in this study pointed out, teachers could benefit from the opportunity to discuss their pilot experiences with other teachers "in the same boat", to share resources, attempt to

solve problems, and just generally bring out into the open what has been happening with their project. Introspection promotes effective teaching. To reiterate Will's comment: "Teachers need to have a lot more time to actually reflect on what we're doing."

4. Resources

Previous creative drama courses and experience teaching drama provided some of the teachers with accessibility to, or at least knowledge of, resources available. For example, in Sue's drama course at the University of Calgary, she "had to keep sort of a diary every day after our drama class. ... So it's really in there very thoroughly and I'll go back and read a certain day and it all comes back to me." In Debbie's drama course at Red Deer College, she "read a lot of books ... and then I did my drama file as well." Regarding resources, Eileen stated that she "had lots from before." Will used "some things I've done in Language Arts which fit very neatly into the curriculum." Joe "bought a series drama kit" and had "a tremendous book on stage make-up that I've been using for the last

three years." On the other hand, Norma Jean's supply of resources for teaching drama was "absolutely none." As she felt so uncomfortable with the concept of creative dramatics, she did not seem able to investigate further resources:

I never looked at any of the glossaries or bibliography in the guide because past experiences have proven to me that they're not available, that by the time you do get them through whatever library source, you've lost interest. ... I didn't and I wouldn't have looked - found anything of value by ordering a book out of somewhere or paying for it or going through the hassle. I wouldn't have done it. It has to be there. It has to be ready.

Norma Jean's comments could bring about discussion regarding the responsibility of teachers as professional educators and the ownership of learning.

5. View of the Curriculum Guide

As an adjunct to the section regarding resources, the teachers' views regarding the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide seemed to be based upon their drama backgrounds. For Sue, Debbie, and Eileen, the guide appeared to be a confirmation of what they were already doing or what they already knew about creative dramatics:

It basically just defined the various components in drama really well, but I feel that I understand those really well and I know what's going on. (Sue).

But I was doing what they said. ... It basically didn't tell me anything I didn't already know because I had done a fair bit of reading on the subject. (Debbie).

It's probably the best curriculum guide we've got. The way it's laid out, for me anyway. (Eileen).

Again, Will's introspection about the drama vs. theatre component that his background afforded him came out in his comments:

I've found myself fighting the actor-director syndrome, and not really coming to grips with what drama can do in the classroom. ... I'm glad to see the drama curriculum is coming along to show us how broad the whole thing can be. ... I have no complaints about the curriculum guide at all. It helped me to understand a little better what the whole drama process is all about.

Joe's desire to learn more about creative drama came out in his response to the Curriculum Guide: "There appeared to be a real framework. They did give you some direction." Norma Jean appeared to be totally exasperated by the Curriculum Guide: "I kept looking and was convinced that I had received the wrong information, that this really wasn't it." With her lack of drama background, she had nothing

to fall back on: "But where are the materials? Where does it tell me where to teach?"

I was looking for something quite practical and the term is hands-on to help me, who had absolutely no experience in drama, to give me more specific ideas in guidance as how to integrate drama into my regular teaching. I didn't have a lot of set kind of practical possible ideas in which you could do, that I could go and say "Okay, this sounds great, this is what I can do" and I was looking for something very specific.

6. The Pilot Teacher's Perception of the Value of Drama

The main inherent theme of previous exposure to drama is borne out in the teachers' view of what drama is all about and what it can do for children. Norma Jean admitted that "a lot of good things can come out of drama - I will acknowledge that." But again, because of her lack of drama background and because she received no assistance from drama experts throughout the duration of the drama pilot, this was the result:

I wouldn't say that I became more confident as a result of this. ... I'm disappointed in that I never achieved as much as I could have - for various reasons, which I'm not going to make excuses for, they just happened to be. ... I'm sure I had wonderful opportunities to demonstrate a drama technique or skill, or to incorporate something in there as a really good learning - but I never saw it. It escapes me.

The three teachers with knowledge of creative dramatics had this to say about its potential:

I have just seen the good things that have come about from drama. ... just the closeness that you get with each other from it. It develops concentration. You learn to relax. ... It stirs the imagination. It's very creative. It's fun. (Sue).

Drama is a way of developing an individual's potential, and it's not an academic potential. It's more of an emotional potential that is really often neglected in our schools. And I feel really positive about doing drama because I've seen kids that don't succeed in things like math and reading - you take them down and you do drama and they just shine. And it's something they just love. And it's something positive for them about school, and it will make them feel positive about themselves, and it's another type of enrichment for students. (Debbie).

Drama is helping the child build his self-awareness of themselves and the world around them, and where they can fit in. And I think it really helps you become more aware of others, their feelings. You become more sensitive through drama. So that's what I found from taking drama - that I became much more sensitive towards people and the environment. (Eileen).

Still trying to overcome his "actor-director" concept of drama, Will commented honestly:

I think I understand it a little better now. I didn't have a clue about it before and I think I'm beginning to understand a little broader implication of it. I'm not able to handle it effectively yet. Given time, I might be able to.

For Joe, the eternal optimist, the drama pilot program had been a learning experience: "I mean, every day wasn't great, but overall when I look back on the year now, all I can think of is good things." And he was delighted with what came out of the project for his students:

I didn't expect the grade fives to do as well as they are, and I've seen something in creativity I haven't experienced in other areas. I guess it's a thing you don't see every day in the traditional - I mean I've taught grades six and grade five regular classroom, and you just don't see that unleashed all the time - here's a perfectly acceptable place to do it, and some of the kids are just astounding, just astounding.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. Studies of teachers who piloted or implemented new curricula in other subject areas could be conducted in order to gain an understanding of their experience and compare it to the experiences of the six pilot teachers in this study in order to determine if piloting a drama program is different from piloting other curricula.

2. Responses of the six teachers interviewed in this study could be compared to comments from the questionnaires completed for Alberta Education by some of the forty-eight teachers who piloted the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum in 1983-84 to see if they were congruent with how other pilot teachers had viewed the experience.

3. Analysis of the Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide and Curriculum Guides in other subject areas could be undertaken in order to compare philosophies, formats, and approaches in order to determine similarities or contrasts that might affect the implementation of the curriculum.

4. A new Junior and Senior High School Drama Curriculum following the Continuum for Child Growth begun in the Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide is being piloted in the 1987-88 school year. A study of the pilot project for this Curriculum Guide would provide a companion to this Elementary Pilot Study. It could serve as a continuation of the analysis of the implementation of the Continuum for Child Growth.

5. Methods of implementing curriculum over the past few years could be examined and perceived "success" of implementation. (e.g.: the "Innovative" project for the 1981 Alberta Social Studies curriculum which involved the concept of peer inservicing: classroom teachers were seconded from their teaching positions to become "peer consultants". Over a period of five months, they provided workshops and follow-up consultation to Grade One to Twelve Social Studies teachers throughout the province.)

Concluding Statement

This study led the researcher toward an understanding of what the experience of being an elementary drama pilot teacher was like and how the pilot teachers felt about this whole experience.

The study provided an avenue for six teachers to reflect upon the experience they had lived for one school year and to verbalize their thoughts and feelings about the experience. Since they were all at different stages in their exploration of creative drama, they contributed a wide range of comments for the researcher's perusal. Through these candid

comments, a great deal was learned about the teachers' frustrations, jubilations, and their positive and negative feelings regarding their experience as drama pilot teachers.

By discussing the pilot project so freely, the teachers provided insight into many components of the drama pilot experience. They shared their attitude toward drama and whether it had changed throughout the course of the project, and they also verbalized their philosophy of drama and what they perceived to be the difference between drama and theatre. They presented their opinions about the new Alberta Elementary Drama Curriculum Guide and available resources, toward inservicing and the follow-up support for the project, and whether or not they were seen as resource people by their colleagues.

All of these insights provided by the six teachers who participated in the study contributed toward the researcher gaining an understanding of what the teachers experienced in their year of being involved in a drama pilot project.

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APPENDIX

EXCERPT FROM AN INTERVIEW

Total Interview: Approx. 90 minutes

Excerpt: Approx. 10 - 12 minutes

"S": Sue

"R": Researcher

R: You had time allotted for the drama as a separate subject, but did you really use it as a separate subject or an integrator? Integrated into your class?

S: It sort, of, sort of blends in a lot, especially with Language Arts, like a lot of the components that were part of the drama, like the choral reading and stuff like that. I handle that in my reading class, in my reading period, like I don't do anything in my drama period. I don't touch that at all. So basically when we went downstairs and did drama, that's when we did things like movement, mime, improvisation, stuff like that.

R: So actually you integrated and taught it as a separate subject?

S: Uh hum

R: Ok, where did you start, did you start with?

S: I always start with movement.

R: Ok, and you start with movement at the beginning of the year. Any reasons why?

S: Um, basically just ... like, the kids from last year had drama with me, too, so they were already aware of what I expected and stuff, as far as.

R: Oh, ya, the grade fours you taught you had taught as grade threes, that's right.

S: So basically for the new kids, I started again with movement and I like to start with movement because that's when I lay down my rules and say, you know, what the freeze is going to be the minute you hear this, or then you know that you're supposed to just freeze, and you get all your guidelines established that way. Plus I feel that with just movement they can sort of be at ease and relax, you know. There's not a lot to think of when they're just moving. If you start with mime, which is much harder, much more complicated, improvisation, too, where all of a sudden they have to think of movement and talking, so it just is so much simpler to start simple and build up.

R: How did you feel about the movement, like about starting there, like yourself, personally?

S: Uh, when I took it at university, the movement part I hated it and we all felt that way, it wasn't just me, like at the end we felt really stupid doing it.

R: Why?

S: I don't know, it was just bad vibes throughout the whole class and we just, and she sensed it, our instructor sensed it, and she just finally said, ok, everyone freeze, sit down, we're going to talk, you know. You're just not into it today, now what's the problem? We just said we hate this, this is ridiculous, blah, blah, blah. So then she went on to explain why we had to do movement exercises and all this and that, so when I first started I thought because I hadn't really enjoyed it myself that uhhhhh, but the kids love it.

R: Well, when you did it at university, was it more phys. ed. tact or were you "everybody's a tree, freeze"?

S: Uh, no, when she started it, it was free movement.

R: Just?

S: Yeah, just moving and she'd give us a word and we'd have to move.

R: Ok, so wind - move like the wind.

S: Yeah, almost like creative dance.

R: And that's the first you were in, the first you were into, this drama class at the beginning and you started with movement yourself?

S: Well, not the very first class, but not too far into it either.

R: But she had you talk about it, ok?

S: Yeah, basically at university we started with oh, relaxation exercises and getting to know each other - trust exercises. But here we don't really need that because the kids know each other so well already. Like, I feel that that's not really as important. I do do some of the trust exercises, but not in any depth.

R: You're right, they do know each other, they've been living together, going to school together, playing together. But that's funny - you didn't really feel comfortable with movement yourself - memories - and yet started there.

S: I'm so into dance though, and now with me teaching dance and that, like I say, movement's very

much like creative dance and I do it. I touch creative dance, too, and the kids just love it, like they just love to, you know, you ask them to move like a puppet and move like a tin soldier and move like a rag doll and move to words, you know, there's no inhibitions at all, they go right to it.

R: When they're doing all those things, you know, moving like a rag doll and moving like a whatever, do you do it too, if you ask them to move like a rag doll, do you participate or do you?

S: Sometimes I will, not always. I guess it depends on your class. There are some kids that if you start to move, they look at you and they copy you because they feel that's what they're supposed to be doing. There have been times when I've sort of demonstrated and then said, ok, go to it and other times when I'll do it with them as I call out and other times when I'll just sit back and watch.

R: Ok, do they every say to you why aren't you doing this or?

S: No, no.

R: Oh, when you were working with your children, did you have them work mostly as a whole group or a whole class or pairs or individuals or a combination?

S: Is this throughout the whole year?

R: Yeah, the whole year.

S: Uh, there again it varies. I start off as a whole group but like each of them moving individually but everybody moving as the same time. And I try to really stress that they move on their own accord, and, you know, tune everyone else out, you know, black out so that you can't see anyone else in the room - it's just you and move however you feel like moving sort of thing so there's not the looking over and see what my friend's doing and copy them. But now we're at the point where we do a lot of like pair-up, you know, find a partner, and I'll give them a situation and they'll have to improvise some different situation or do a whole class skit where the whole class is involved in one story sort of thing and develop it.

R: So you do that, a group drama?

S: Uh, hum.

R: You do, so you actually used a bit of everything - whole class and groups and pairs. And you used the room, (Debbie) was saying she used this big room with the piano, you use the other room.

S: Yeah, the old library, which is now the lunch room.

R: Does it have a carpet, too?

S: Yes.

R: So it's got a carpet - and no furniture in it?

S: Yeah, it's got tables and chairs in it cause it's where the kids eat now.

R: Ok, so it's where all the kids eat. So do you have to have your children move the furniture?

S: Oh, automatically the first, as soon as the door's unlocked, they're in there moving the desks, pushing them to the sides and stacking the chairs, and they get them all out of the way and then as soon as they're done, they sit down and wait for directions.

R: So that's not a real problem.

S: Oh, no, they know what is expected of them and they can hardly wait for drama to start so they're real fast getting the chairs and tables out of the way and clearing room.

R: Ok, um, this is a hard question, but can you think back to an actual lesson you taught or just how you generally taught a lesson? How you taught your lessons throughout the year?

S: You want me to think of a particular one?

R: Or just generally how you taught your lessons.

S: Well, they come in and they clear off the space, first off, and get it ready, then they usually just sit down, as soon as we're ready, sit down.

R: Any place? Or in a circle?

S: Just anywhere in the room, usually around where I am. And then I usually start off with doing some concentration type exercise just to get them concentrating.

R: You don't start with a warm-up?

S: Well.

R: That is the warm-up - concentration?

S: Yeah, sort of my warm-up exercise.

S: And let's see, ok, other times I'd done rather than concentration more like relaxation-type exercises at the beginning or a group thing where they're all in a circle, do a little chant or rhythm type thing. Then we get into whatever we're working on for the period, if we're doing mime, I do a stretch of mime, so many weeks of mime, and if its mime, then we'll get into some mime situation, and.

R: And do, just before you go on, do they go on, do you have a theme or whatever, that if they're doing

mime or whatever and they're not finished it, they'd finish it Thursday, and go on and on and on?

S: There have been instances where we've run out of time. I find the kids are really keen to show their work to others.

R: Oh, they are?

S: And I don't push it because I feel if they don't want to show it and share, fine. I don't make a big deal of it, but I find that's not a problem. I find the problem is they all want to show it, and being only half an hour period, you don't always have time to see everyone's. And so there have been a few instances, where I've said well, you can show yours next, next class, sort of thing. But I don't like to, like I like each day to start something.

R: Ok, go ahead. So you work on your mime or whatever you're focusing in on.

S: And it usually ends there unfortunately. You're supposed to relax them at the end, and bring them back down, but like I say the period is so short as it is. The bell goes, quite often we'll watch another two groups and then we'll go out for recess. But my drama class is followed by recess anyway so I feel there's not a big need

for relaxation anyway cause I feel they're just gonna get outside and get hyper anyways so let them go out hyper.

R: Uh, do you debrief with them, like at the end of the period? If you've got time, like do you talk about what you've done with them?

S: Quite often, yes, we will discuss it.

R: Not every day, just.

S: No, no.

R: All right.

O