

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

THE USE OF GAMES AS A METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING DRAMATIC ARTS
AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

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by

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to set forth instructional procedures for a game approach to teaching dramatic arts and to examine the approach through classroom application and evaluation. The study reviews literature on the development, scope and values of games in education, and the use of games in the study of dramatic arts. A preliminary analysis of Improvisation for the Theatre, by Viola Spolin, proved useful to the teacher for developing lesson plans and organizing meaningful group activities.

Two heterogeneous classes of grade ten students participated in the program. At the outset of the course, students were instructed in the basic elements of games so that they could apply them in a number of individual and group activities, both real-life and simulated life-experiences.

Evaluation of the course and procedures include a checklist for rating the game and written responses to a questionnaire completed by the students taking the courses. Because of the emphasis on process, the major part of the evaluation was done by the students themselves.

On the whole, students reacted favorably to the game approach. Many felt that the method of instruction gave them a better understanding of themselves and others in both game and real-life situations. Students suggested they would recommend this method for other students because it was interesting and because it provided for different levels of ability among students.

The results of the study suggest that the game approach increases student involvement and motivation to learn, and thus it could be valuable for teachers of drama and English.

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CHAPTER 1

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the use of games as a methodology in the teaching of dramatic arts at the secondary level, and to analyze and synthesize the approach through classroom application and evaluation.

The methodology involved the preparation and presentation of twenty drama lessons, based on the use of games, to thirty representative grade ten students. Lessons were designed to provide opportunities for individual creative expression while students learned to apply the following common elements in games to real-life situations: purpose, procedures, rules, number of players, roles of participants, participant interaction patterns, and results in terms of values assigned to the outcome of action.¹

Evaluation of this approach included an assessment of the procedures and the observable responses of the students involved. Criteria for evaluation will be discussed later in the study.

¹Elliott M. Avedon/Brian Sutton-Smith, The Study of Games (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1971), p. 422.

Definition of Terms

Game

The definition of 'game' is wide and varied. In Viola Spolin's book, Improvisation for the Theatre, the game is defined as a "natural group form providing the involvement and personal freedom necessary for experiencing."²

In examining the use of games in learning, Mary Reilly, in her book, Play as Exploratory Learning, extends the meaning of a game:

A game is an activity between one or more independent decision makers, seeking to achieve their objectives in some limiting context. A more conventional definition would say, a game is a contest with rules among adversaries trying to win objectives. The trouble with this definition is that not all games are contests among adversaries. In some games, players cooperate to achieve a common goal against an obstructing force or natural situation which is itself not really a player because it does not have objectives.³

William Martin and Gordon Vallins, in Exploration Drama, offer a definition of games that assumes much wider implications than the previous ones:

²Viola Spolin, Improvisation for the Theatre, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 4.

³Mary Reilly, editor, Play as Exploratory Learning, (London: Sage Publications, 1974), p. 36.

The games children play are highly developed forms of their creative expression. They have been shaped by time and fulfil a structural role in the growing dramatic needs of children. They grow out of the children's experiences and have the essential toughness and vitality of true ritual... The development of games from primitive ritual seems a natural process. The development from games to drama is also natural, for all games contain the need of conflict and exploration of life which form the essence of drama. Such games are for taking part, not spectators. Children's games are themselves an elemental form of drama, in which the children work out, through established patterns, problems which affect their own lives.⁴

Definition of Game as Applicable to this Study

The definitions of a game presented by Spolin, Reilly, Martin and Vallins, form the basis for the following definition to be used throughout this study.

The game is a natural group form providing involvement and personal freedom for one or more dependent decision-makers, who, with the use of rules and objectives, work out problems which relate to their own lives.

Dramatic Arts

This is the term used to describe the new experimental courses which were set up by the Theatre Arts Committee under the authority of the Manitoba Department of Education in 1975. Guidelines for the definition of dramatic arts are set out by this committee in the program:

⁴William Martin/Gordon Vallins, Exploration Drama, (London: Cox and Wyman, Ltd., 1968), p. 7.

Dramatic art is the art of playing.... It is for this reason that the program outlined here approaches the study of drama and theatre through the playing of dramatic games, at first very simple, then more and more complex. The students begin by playing very simple improvisational games, the game-plan being limited to a simple point of concentration. As his skill and sophistication increases, he is introduced to more complex game-plans. The scripted play itself is seen as a highly complex game, the game-plan of which requires that all of the dramatic skills built up through simpler dramatic games be utilized.⁵

Drama

Drama comes from a Greek word, and means 'to do' or 'to act'. In this study, drama does not apply to what is generally an off-shoot of the language arts program at the high school level, that is, formal play-reading and analysis. Instead, 'drama', as it applies to this study, emphasizes the process of participation rather than the production of the trained actor, direct experience rather than indirect experience. Drama means putting ideas into verbal and physical action which convey significance primarily to the participants.

There is also the problem of defining the term 'drama' as opposed to 'theatre'. This is necessary because students and administrators are often confused with the two activities, which can differ greatly in function. Brian Way states the difference clearly:

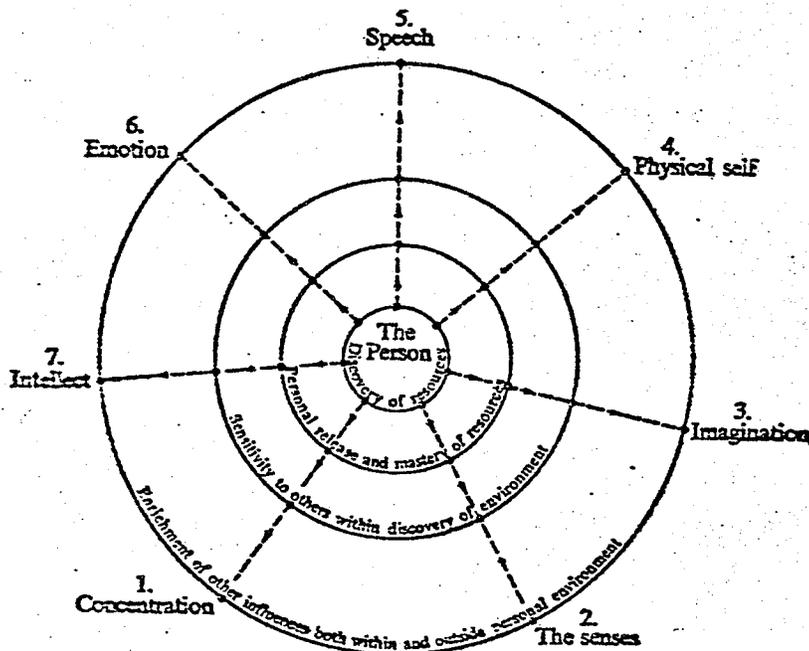
⁵Manitoba Department of Education, Experimental Dramatic Arts Program, Manitoba Levels 1, 11, 111, 1974, p. 1.

'Theatre' is largely concerned with communication between actors and an audience; 'drama' is largely concerned with experience by the participants, irrespective of any function of communication to an audience.⁶

It is essential that the term 'drama' be defined as clearly as possible so that students, parents and administrators will not be misled by a course outline headed by the all-encompassing word, 'drama'. In this study, 'drama' is defined as a means of exploring the development of an individual's thoughts and feelings through direct experience.

Development of the Whole Person

This study is not concerned with producing the school play. It does concern itself with the development of an individual through the use of games. Turning to Brian Way's theory concerning the development of a human being through drama, one should begin by looking at Way's diagram:



⁶Brian Way, Development Through Drama, (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1967), pp. 2-3.

Way explains the diagram in this manner:

All possible points on the circle exist in each person. At this stage, only the inner circle really concerns us, as at the beginnings of drama we are concerned with helping each individual to discover and explore his or her own resources, irrespective of other people. Touching upon all these factors, and to an extent the root upon which they all depend, is the growing ability to concentrate; whenever that concentration is full, then both the quality of attempt and the degree of mastery will likewise be full.⁷

Each resource of which Way speaks is included in the list of objectives outlined in the experimental dramatic arts program.

The concept 'development of the whole person', as it appears in this study, is based on Way's conception of the 'person'.

Improvisation

'Improvisation', according to Hodgson and Richards, refers to the idea of individuals responding in different ways to a stimulus. The authors do not confine improvisation to a single activity relating to acting. In the dramatic arts program, improvisation refers to the freedom and creativity that a person can call upon to solve a problem in a game, once he is aware of the given circumstances.

The word 'improvisational' has become interchangeable with the terms 'creative dramatics' and 'improvised drama'. Improvisation is usually interpreted as, creating extemporaneously.

Acting

'Acting', according to Viola Spolin, means making something happen:

⁷Ibid, p. 12.

Everyone can act. Everyone can improvise.... We learn through experience and experiencing, and no one teaches anyone anything. This is as true for the infant moving from kicking to crawling to walking as it is for the scientist with his equations. If the environment permits it, anyone can learn whatever he chooses to learn; and if the individual permits it, the environment will teach him everything it has to teach. Experience is penetration into the environment, total organic involvement with it. This means involvement on all levels: intellectual, physical, and intuitive.⁸

In the dramatic arts program, it is stated that all acting consists of games, and that a role played by a student is also seen as a game, and not as a complicated acting device.

Mime

'Mime' is a term used to describe a means of non-verbal expression and communication through the use of the body.

Sensory Awareness

'Sensory awareness' is a term applying to the use of the five senses. Both mime and sensory awareness are dependent upon the individual's degree of concentration, as is shown in Way's diagram considering the development of the whole person. Through the use of games and mime, sensory awareness and concentration can be further developed.

Design of the Study

The study was conducted with two classes of grade ten students, with a total enrollment of thirty. Both classes received the same number of hours of instruction. This figure was

⁸Viola Spolin, Improvisation for the Theatre, p. 3.

ninety hours of instruction, with possible reduction due to the split-shift situation at Westdale School. Both classes received the same number of hours of instruction, using activities selected because of their effectiveness in achieving the following aims of the course:

1. To develop awareness of self, of others, of physical environment, of cultural environment, and of cultural heritage;
2. To foster the development of a wide range of skills such as ease and confidence in physical activity, powers of concentration, powers of creative imagination, co-operative skills, ability to reason, and ability to express themselves;
3. To promote self-discipline, emotional maturity, self-evaluation, a positive attitude toward all the arts, a sense of excitement and joy of learning, and objectivity in dealing with the problems of the immediate environment and of society at large.⁹

The game approach attempts to reach each aim or goal. Each goal represents areas which are essential in the development of the whole person.

The course was evaluated on the basis of the following criteria by participating students:

1. Rating of the games to be used in the classes. This entailed a summary of student responses to a checklist devised to help them evaluate a game in terms of its common elements - purpose, procedures, rules, number of players, roles of participants, participant interaction patterns, and results according to values assigned to the outcome of action.

⁹Manitoba Department of Education, p. 2.

This is the rating that was used: 1 = very effective
 2 = good
 3 = fair
 4 = poor

The participant evaluated each element of the game by circling only one number in each section.

The key for the rating was omitted from the student's paper.

2. Written responses to a questionnaire that contained the following questions:

- a) Why did you like/dislike the game?
- b) Why did you like/dislike yourself in the game?
- c) Why was the game fun? Why not?
- d) Why did the game have the right number of/too many rules?
- e) Why would you like/not like to play the game again?
- f) Why did the game represent/not represent a real-life experience?
- g) How can this game be played/not be played more imaginatively?
- h) Why could this game become/not become part of a story?
- i) Why were there enough/not enough players for this game?
- j) Why did you like/not like your role in the game?
- k) Why would you have liked/not liked a different role?
- l) Why was the outcome satisfactory/not satisfactory?
- m) Why did you mind/not mind losing?
- n) Why were you concentrating fully/not concentrating fully on the game?
- o) Why were you co-operating fully/not co-operating fully?

Both the rating scale and the questionnaire were administered periodically throughout the course so that feedback was coming into the investigator on more than one occasion.

3. On the final questionnaire, the following questions appeared:

- a) What is your opinion of the dramatic arts program?
- b) What do you think of the game approach in teaching dramatic arts?
- c) Do you prefer other methods of studying dramatic arts? If so, explain.

- d) What benefits do you think you have gained from the game approach to dramatic arts?
- e) Was the quantity of work that you were required to do satisfactory or unsatisfactory?
- f) What are some of the activities you found beneficial?
- g) Did these activities help to give you a better understanding of yourself and others?
- h) What changes would you suggest if you were going to take a similar course to this one?
- i) What other activities would you include?
- j) Would you recommend this method of teaching dramatic arts for other students? Why? or, Why not?

Other questions to be included in the final questionnaire dealt with specifically structured questions such as:

- k) Check (x) one of the following:

Were you satisfied at the end of the course that you learned

- i) more about yourself and others than you usually do in other courses?
- ii) just as much as usual?
- iii) less than usual?
- iv) not sure?

and,

- l) Check (x) in which of the following ways the game approach can be useful to students:

- i) in providing opportunity for sharing experience?
- ii) in providing for individual expression?
- iii) in providing for varying abilities among students?
- iv) in providing for student interests?
- v) others (specify)

4. A taped, informal interview, with a special segment of the group involved was administered because some students had difficulty in expressing themselves in a written manner and asked if they could use the tape recorder as an alternate means of providing information. The questions in the taped interview were identical to those on the written questionnaire, in order that the responses could be used in the overall evaluation.

5. Since classroom observations and inferences were also used in assessing the effectiveness of this methodology to the teaching of dramatic arts, part of the evaluation had to be carried out by the classroom teacher.

Limitations of the Study

1. The size of the drama classes was restricted to a total enrollment of thirty.
2. The study was limited to one year's investigation.
3. Sources for this study were limited to those already mentioned.
4. The study was limited to a rather narrow sample. The participating group was not homogeneous since classes were made up of students with varying abilities.
5. Because the dramatic arts course was an option course at Westdale School, most of the students were drama-oriented.
6. Because twenty-eight of the students had not been exposed to the method of instruction before, a different treatment by the teacher in the case of the two students resulted.
7. The study, in emphasizing process rather than the end product, was to limit the major portion of evaluation to the students, and a minor portion to the classroom teacher.
8. Because of the subjective nature of dramatic arts, and the difficulty in testing for appreciation and creativity, values claimed for the game methodology were not measured in scientific terms. The study, then, does not ensure a high degree of reliability.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Since a Theatre Arts Committee was appointed to design courses in dramatic arts based on games as a methodology of teaching, and, if possible, to collect information on its strengths or weaknesses, it could be concluded that the Manitoba Department of Education has shown some interest in the use of dramatic games as a method of teaching and learning.

Elliot M. Avedon and Brian Sutton-Smith have raised several hypotheses concerning the value of games in education:

- a) Games engender more student interest than the more conventional activities;
- b) By participating in games, the students will learn more facts and principles than by studying in the conventional manner;
- c) Students will acquire more critical thinking and decision-making skills by participating in games.
- d) Students' attitudes will be significantly altered by taking part in games.¹¹ (This implies a positive correlation between games and attitudes.)

C. H. Cherryholmes, author of some current research in the area of educational games, states that:

The only hypothesis that has been completely accepted so far is the first one - students are more interested in simulation activities than in conventional classroom activities. Therefore, it may be said that what is now known about games and simulations as instructional media is this: they are useful devices for getting and holding student interest and attention.¹²

¹¹Elliot M. Avedon/Brian Sutton Smith, The Study of Games, p. 321.

¹²C. H. Cherryholmes, "Some Current Research on Effectiveness of Educational Simulations," American Behavioral Scientist, 10, October, 1966, pp. 4-7.

A study that explores games as a teaching methodology will be beneficial to teachers of many disciplines, as well as to drama teachers who are either already established or who are thinking of embarking on the use of games in dramatic arts.

The study should be of significance to educators interested in developing the whole child, rather than just one part of him, for it stresses the growth of self-awareness and within the group, an awareness of other people and their needs. The guide states that:

The main objective of the dramatic arts program... is the personal development of the student physically, emotionally, intellectually, and culturally.... In teaching these courses, teachers must not lose sight of the essential fact that the essence of dramatic activity is "play". It is in play that human beings make the fullest use of intellectual, emotional and imaginative resources. If students can be encouraged to tackle "dramatic problems" in a spirit of creative play, the consequent freeing of the imagination can have significant results in increasing their ability to tackle problems in every area of life with full use of creativity and imagination.¹³

Because this study will provide a selection of functional games for the dramatic arts program at the secondary level, it should be of significance to teachers of English and those concerned with curriculum design and development in providing an interesting supplement to the various methods used in teaching English.

D. W. Chambers, for example, has stated six advantages to be gained from using dramatic arts as an approach to teaching skills in English.¹⁴

¹³Manitoba Department of Education, p. 1.

¹⁴Dewey W. Chambers, Storytelling and Creative Drama. (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Company, Publishers, 1970), pp. 82-87.

He believes that students who experience the creative drama technique become very aware of interpretation and literary analysis. The process of preparing, carrying out and evaluating their creative drama provides a detailed understanding of the nature of literary analysis.

Chambers suggests that listening skills are developed when students must comprehend the storyteller, evaluate the dramatic activity, and apply what they have learned to their own creative endeavours.

He states, that since students use oral language skills in preparing and developing games, games provide an exciting basis for the development of oral communication skills.

Through the game, students are encouraged to look at characterization through role-playing, and other aspects of drama in a great variety of ways.

Chambers suggests that games can help students develop skill in planning. The step-by-step development of an idea will demonstrate to them the process of planning from the abstract to the concrete presentation.

Finally, he believes that through games, children develop the skills of effective evaluation. He stresses the need for positive evaluation for purposes of strengthening and improving the product or idea.

Edna Conrad and Mary Van Dyke, reporting on an interdisciplinary approach, note that students gained a number of benefits from the experience of dramatizing an historical event in

a game-like manner.¹⁵ Apart from the need for co-operativeness in preparing for a common task, the authors report that students benefitted in two areas: a) personal growth, and b) English skills.

In the first area, personal growth, the authors felt that students learned the necessity for give and take when working together. They learned to listen to the ideas of others, since frequently the ideas arose from unexpected sources. They discovered that there were more ways of learning than just one, and that what seemed unorthodox could be illuminating. They learned to accept responsibility and to work hard to bring about the success of the presentation. They learned to order their thoughts for the development of the best possible script.

In the second area, the authors felt that the students gained in a number of areas related to English composition through the dramatic activities. They enumerated the following areas: form and punctuation in dramatic writing, direct and indirect quotation, style and usage of the era, vocabulary development and precise use of words, receiving and giving directions, providing adequate content for audience consumption and improving grammar and style of writing.

Joan Haggerty, another writer, stresses the impact of creative dramatics in her book, Please, Miss, Can I Play God? She states that,

¹⁵Edna Conrad/Mary Van Dyke, History on the Stage. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1971), pp. 97-101.

"To repeat a situation very close to them (the children) emotionally was often rewarding in terms of their absorption and concentration."¹⁶

¹⁶Joan Haggerty, Please, Miss, Can I Play God? (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1966), p. 60.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A careful check of the ERIC files from January, 1966, to February, 1977, shows some specific studies have been done on a game approach to the teaching of dramatic arts at a secondary level. Further examination of materials such as the English Journal, from January, 1966, to March, 1977, and The Journal of Creative Behaviour, from 1969 to 1974, have led to the same conclusion.

Some literature generally connected with the original game theory was found, and following is a summarized version of some of the most pertinent literature showing how the game theory in education has evolved.

Early Teaching Games

The concept of games as an educational device, dates back to the time of the early Greeks and Romans. Their instructors taught their youth through the use of games. In Rome, the people learned war-games. In Greece, the people learned various athletic games. These games were serious because they reflected the real life of the people at the time.¹⁷

¹⁷Roland August, Cruelty and Civilization: The Roman Games. (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1972), p. 1.

Many games originated in myths associated with the adventures of the gods rather than those drawn from a ritual source. It is in such secondary myth that I believe the origin of sport in its religious form, and, to some extent, that of drama, is to be found.¹⁸

Further evidence of the significance of games in early education dates back to the Medieval Period in England, when tournaments were not only for entertainment, but also regular practice of arms. Although these were considered games, the skills developed matched the skills necessary in real combat situations. Furthermore, children played games based on tournaments and jousting matches. Many games of children at this time were said to be mimetic of the acts of their elders, and were often related to the serious occupations of adults, or imitative of them.¹⁹ The games of children became their very lessons for life.²⁰

After academies sprang up during the Renaissance Period, the imitative aspect of games was seen to emerge and gradually form a part of the school curriculum.²¹

¹⁸Lewis Spence, Myth and Ritual in Dance, Game and Rhythm. (London: Watts & Company, 1971), p. 14.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 69.

²⁰Ibid., p. 69.

²¹Richard Courtney, Play, Drama and Thought: The Intellectual-Background to Dramatic Education. (London: Cassell & Company, 1968), pp. 13-14.

Modern Teaching Games

Traditionally, games have been regarded as recreative within most educational systems within the last 50 years, and there is a lack of definite research on the effects of games on the educative process. In The Power of Play, it is stated that:

Most educators make a sharp distinction between academic work and play. They relegate all play to the preschool period and all work to the primary and secondary school years. Few educators, even today, readily consider play as the art of learning. We have been conditioned to think of play and seriousness as antitheses.²²

The authors feel that the importance of games should not be overlooked because of a lack of research. They feel that schools today are not conducive to learning with the restrictions imposed upon students by school bells, stationary desks, and large classes, and feel that "the child who feels that he can no longer influence his environment soon loses interest. He ceases to be responsive to academic learning."²³ It is their feeling that:

Games offer freedom of action, an imaginary world that can be mastered, adventure, a base for language building, power for building interpersonal relations, opportunities for mastery of the physical self, further interest and concentration, a way to investigate the material world, a way of learning adults' roles, a way to refine judgments.²⁴

²²Frank and Teresa Caplan, The Power of Play. (New York: Anchor Press, 1973), p. xviii.

²³Ibid., p. xviii.

²⁴Ibid., p. xviii.

Eric Berne, in Games People Play, feels that games must be taken more seriously:

To say that the bulk of social activity consists of playing games does not necessarily mean that it is mostly "fun" or that the parties are not seriously engaged in the relationship. The use of the word 'game' should not be misleading.²⁵

Jerome Singer, in The Child's World of Make-Believe, discusses how the game represents such a serious ongoing activity in the development of a person that:

In the security of the game he makes acquaintances with insecurity, he is able to rationalize absurdities, reconcile himself to not getting his own way, assimilate reality, act heroically without being in danger.²⁶

Examples of how a child makes acquaintances with insecurity are stated in the book:

Children in Berlin, shortly after the building of the wall, were observed shooting at each other across miniature walls. In the United States, shortly after the assassination of President Kennedy, many children were found playing assassination games. The game that proved the most terrible indictment ever made against man, was children in the Auschwitz concentration camp playing 'going to the gas chamber'.²⁷

Elliot M. Avedon and Brian Sutton-Smith stress the need for games within the school structure:

²⁵Eric Berne, Games People Play. (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1974), p. 17.

²⁶Jerome Singer, The Child's World of Make-Believe. (New York: Academic Press, 1973), p. 17.

²⁷Ibid., p. 19.

It is in schools where the games are most varied and where their use may prove most rewarding. Why are games considered effective learning aids? For one thing, they spur motivation. Students get very absorbed in the competition aspect of the game. They try harder at games than in some courses. Games give students an opportunity to practice decision-making techniques or approaches studied in the classroom. They force students to live with the consequences of their decisions, an experience hard to get in the classroom.²⁸

Mary Reilly, in Play as Exploratory Learning, elaborated on George Herbert Mead's 'rules and roles' theory which is based largely on games being an important learning device:

The fact that social roles are learned through play implies that a child must play at society and at socialization before he can take on the serious behavior of maturity. He proposed as important to self the behavior of play and games. In games the child must have the attitude of all the others involved in the game. What he does is controlled by his being everybody else on his team. Later on in life what he does is controlled by others, which is an organization of the attitudes of those involved in the same process. Games are a means by which patterns enter as a whole into the individual's experience.²⁹

Mead states that a person does not become whole, has no definite character, no definite personality until he has an organized personality and he has internalized the rules, or the morals, of that society and becomes an essential member of it. He goes on to say that internalization of rules is derived from the experience of games.³⁰

²⁸ Elliot W. Avedon and Brian Sutton-Smith, The Study of Games, p. 331.

²⁹ Mary Reilly, editor, Play as Exploratory Learning. (London: Sage Publications, 1974), pp. 106-107.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 107.

Jerome Singer has found from personal observations and conversations with secondary students, that "there is a considerable continuing interest in make-believe activities and fantasy games which is largely suppressed,"³¹ and that a number of students have told him they wish they had friends who would be willing to indulge more extensively in games "of any continued nature".

David Miller, in Gods and Games, suggests that adults find it "charming" when small children play at being adult, and maybe older people should play at being adult as well:

Hence if adults were to play at being adult, rather than working so hard at it, would they not again be children? Were such to happen we would observe that it was an accident, a happy sunrise, serendipity, something achieved not by laboring at it. This is the goal of life, not to win the game (we are all going to lose the game of life anyway), but simply to play and to play simply.³²

Kostas Axeles sees our lives as being made up of games and states, "... the game is not only one of the fundamental forces, it is one of the configurations. It pervades them all, it incorporates them: All "are in" the game and all make the game which is not the game of someone or something. Behind the masks no one and nothing is hidden, other than the game of the world."³³

³¹Jerome Singer, The Child's World of Make-Believe, pps. 245-246.

³²David L. Miller, Gods and Games. (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1970), p. 130.

³³Jacques Eherrmann, Game, Play, Literature. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 7.

Spolin, Way, and Modern Research

The studies of Viola Spolin and Brian Way have a very important bearing in having led to this particular study, which states that the game is both an integral and functional element in the teaching of dramatic arts.

Both authors feel the playing of games must be prominent in the teaching process, and that through games the teacher-director can derive insight into each student's attitudes, reality, and behavior. Within the framework of a one-hour class, a game can condense "the essence of a complex and long drawn-out typical life-experience. In this way, and because of the varied content of games, the child gets more and different experiences from games than is otherwise possible in the process of everyday life."³⁴

Brian Way has also found the game methodology to be valuable in that it provides the opportunity to play out situations which afford the same kind of simple relief to children as adults achieve by talking their troubles over with a friend.³⁵

If education is concerned with preparing young people for living rather than for a job for life, then it must concern itself with "the whole person".³⁶ The achievement of skill in all human activities is dependent on practice, and it is largely through games that students can achieve this practice.

³⁴Viola Spolin, Improvisation for the Theatre, p. 281.

³⁵Brian Way, Development Through Drama, p. 225.

³⁶Ibid., p. 6.

Lyovonne M. Trad, in an article called "Acting as Awareness", describes his success with the Viola Spolin methodology:

As a teacher I was bored with teaching by grading and evaluating scenes. I began a search for a type of class that would release students' creativity and restore their imaginations. Of course, I rediscovered Viola Spolin's Improvisation for the Theatre (Northwestern University Press, 1963). After reading through it again, several ideas occurred to me:³⁷

One of the ideas that occurred to him was that through the use of theatre games, much of the inhibitions of his secondary students would be broken down. Furthermore, by using games as well as some "awareness" exercises like those suggested by Brian Way, students would become sensitive to each other as human beings and sensitive to themselves.

With these ideas in mind, Trad and his students began what seemed to many a "fun and games class",³⁸ which he states was highly successful:

I believe the success of these classes is due in large measure to the "open" atmosphere, the freedom in the room. The fact that a "games" structure is imposed doesn't hinder the creativity and imagination of students; in fact, the structure reduces the tensions of performing, and improvisation it is to³⁹ be hoped improves most students' verbal ability.

Trad describes some of the Spolin games and exercises which he deems most valuable, such as the Orientation Game No. Two, "It's Heavier When It's Full" and "How Old Am I?". It is

³⁷Lyovonne M. Trad, "Acting as Awareness," The English Journal, Vol. 61, No. 1, January, 1972, pp. 76-77.

³⁸Ibid., p. 76.

³⁹Ibid., p. 77.

through games such as these that the teacher learns a great deal more about each individual and is in a position to help him with his problems (acting problems as well as others).⁴⁰

The students themselves have evaluated the course taught by Trad as follows:

Because of its freedom, there is more respect; when I come into this room, I feel free to explore and experiment; you're free to express yourself without fear of criticism; there is a difference between learning subject matter and learning as people; in acting we learn as people.⁴¹

Not all teachers have been as fortunate as Lyovonne Trad who has found success by reading through Spolin. In Bob Eberle's article, "Does Creative Dramatics Really Square With Research Evidence?", the opposite is suggested:

It seems safe to say that less than five per cent of the teachers in service across the nation have had formal instruction in the teaching of creative dramatics. The knowledge and skill needed to make the subject operational in classrooms is, for all practical purposes, a non-existent talent among the greater number of school teachers.⁴²

In his article, Eberle stated that his intention was to determine if and how well, creative drama squares with research evidence on good teaching and learning practices. Throughout his article, he makes constant reference to the philosophy and methodology of Viola Spolin as being valuable to teachers:

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 77.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 77.

⁴²Bob Eberle, "Does Creative Dramatics Really Square With Research Evidence?", The Journal of Creative Behavior, Vol. 8, No. 3., 3rd Quarter, 1974.

Those familiar with the classic work of Spolin (1972) will find no difficulty in relating the concepts of quality education to the philosophical and operational structure of creative dramatics.⁴³

Eberle stresses the importance of searching out the indicators of quality which may be used to justify the place of games in the curriculum. He found four major concepts that were investigated by Vincent (1969), that could be used to judge factors in school quality. These are individualization of instruction, interpretational regard, creativity and group activity.⁴⁴ These elements are present and easily identifiable in games.

Eberle cites the research done by Cole, in 1972, educational psychologist, who was seeking to justify process-oriented teaching and learning. Six of Cole's points appear relevant and supportive of games:

1. The acquisition of skills insures an individual who can successfully solve problems, and this leads to a healthy and productive personality.
2. Skills are more widely applicable than knowledge and information.
3. Skills are more permanent than other types of learning.
4. Information is easily obtained when needed, but skills cannot be "looked up."
5. An emphasis on skills in educational practices is needed to prevent academic isolationism and social irrelevancy.
6. Skills are required for man's peaceful co-existence with others of his species.⁴⁵

⁴³Ibid., p. 178.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 178.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 179.

Eberle links problem-solving ability, the first of Cole's points, to Spolin, who stresses continuous work on and solving of problems opens everyone to their own source and power. Eberle also cites the work of Davis (1973), who states one of the best ways to stimulate thinking, problem-solving, and imagination, is through the use of creative dramatics.

Eberle speaks highly of Spolin's Point of Concentration in game activity, because it represents the force that preoccupies and blanks the mind towards a pre-determined goal. The findings from the Psychophysiology Laboratory in Topeka, Kansas, also praise Spolin's magical force that helps the individual to focus and play at the same time.⁴⁶

Derek Bowskill, in his article, "Drama in Secondary Education", stresses the importance of spontaneity in creative activities. Spontaneity is one of Spolin's main concerns in her book, Improvisation for the Theatre, and Bowskill demonstrates its importance:

Creative dramatic work is more valuable than theatre in education because learning takes place only when the student is involved in a spontaneous act - is 'switched on'.⁴⁷

Bowskill suggests that the proper use of games can help to organize the whole personality of the student towards the act of life, and at the same time leave room for flexibility and spontaneity.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 181.

⁴⁷Derek Bowskill, "Drama in Secondary Education", English in Education, Vol. 1, No. 3, Autumn, 1967, p. 13.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 14.

This statement by Bowskill supports the theory behind Brian Way's concern for the development of the 'whole' person.

Grace Layman, in her article, "Educational Drama: Steps to Oral Language", has listed many games and activities which she feels adds to the growth and development of every student. She defines educational drama as follows:

Educational drama is an approach to teaching and learning, a method by which a child is given an opportunity to express with freedom and self-imposed discipline the knowledge and experiences that are his own, much of which have been dormant simply because he had had little opportunity to express these experiences.⁴⁹

Layman, like Brian Way, stresses the development of the uniqueness of the individual as the basis of education. Moreover, she is concerned that many teachers are not familiar with a developmental approach to drama, and that games and activities as a tool for teaching in unexperienced hands can cause damage.

Layman states that her program is developmental in nature, and that it is through dramatic activities like games that the student develops his maximum potential for growth - physical, social, emotional and intellectual.⁵⁰

There are other researchers who are most concerned with the improper use of games in classrooms. One of these is Sarane Boocock:

⁴⁹Grace Layman, "Educational Drama: Steps to Oral Language", (St. John's: Publications Committee, 1974), p. 1.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 36.

If not properly prepared, students may miss the entire point of the game. If not introduced at the appropriate point in a course, games may simply interrupt with no reason for being. There is a need to "develop principles for using games effectively".⁵¹

Another researcher upset with the incorrect use of games is Sheila Schwartz, who teaches at the State University College of New York. This was her statement:

A few years ago, at a session on Creative Dramatics for English Teachers, I watched a group of willing, but puzzled teachers force themselves to be good sports and to go through a series of activities expected of them. There was nothing wrong with these exercises per se. What was unfortunate was the fact that these amiable teachers didn't know why they were doing what they were doing. They did not know either the momentary or broader purposes of the exercises.⁵²

Schwartz stresses the need for a theoretical framework in order that teachers and students can understand the value and purpose of games. Without this understanding, games can not become a meaningful tool for education.

Schwartz attributes the origin of the game theory to the Russian actor/director, Konstantin Stanislavski. Improvisation was an important tool of his training system which was based, to a large extent, on a creative and spontaneous process. Many of Stanislavski's warm-ups had a game-like quality about them, and it is from his teachings that Schwartz derives a theoretical

⁵¹Sarane S. Boocock, "Using Simulation Games in College Courses", *Simulation and Games*, (Atlanta: National Council, 1970), p. 73.

⁵²Sheila Schwartz, "Involving Students in the Drama Process," *The English Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 5, May, 1975, p. 32.

base for a program of sequential creative games in the classroom.⁵³

Schwartz recommends certain games such as Simple Simon or Follow the Leader for good physical warm-ups. Once physically loosened, the student could be introduced to more complex games and improvisations.

Another individual who uses her knowledge of Stanislavski's work to develop more complex games is Joan Littlewood, a British director. One of the actors in the company described an exercise about a prison scene that proved to be a very serious game:

Although it was just a kind of game, the boredom and meanness of it all was brought home. Next, the game was extended - the whole dreary routine of washing out your cell, standing to attention, sucking up to the screws, trading tobacco, was improvised and developed. It began to seem less and less like a game, and more real.⁵⁴

Stephen Dunning, in his article, "Scripting - A Way of Talking", suggests that some basic changes need to be made in the English classroom. One of these changes would be the addition of several games:

I call for simple games and complex games. Simple games, especially simulations, will correspond at all points with the real world. Most games should require kids to do hard, fun languaging jobs that make imaginative languaging "necessary"; games that work well, seem worthwhile to the players, and have payoff or intrinsic value of some kind.⁵⁵

⁵³Ibid., p. 34.

⁵⁴John Hodgson and Ernest Richards, Improvisation: London: Eyre Methuen Ltd.), 1968, p. 4.

⁵⁵Stephen Dunning, "Scripting - A Way of Talking," The English Journal, Vol. 63, No. 6, Sept., 1974, p. 34.

Dunning states that the more fun that something else can be made, and the greater the variety and quality of languaging jobs, the better the game.⁵⁶

Dunning feels that through the use of games in the English classroom, the following occurs:

1. The work changes (and to my mind, for the better). Work is done with greater care, from greater interest, with greater "personality."

2. Relationships in the classroom change. Students are fellow game players, sometimes competing against a large group of others, sometimes competing against a clock; sometimes against perfection itself. Pleasant competition in games can be promoted and help to diminish emphasis on grades. Good games have lots of winners.

3. Relationships between teacher and student change, too. They improve. The teacher is a person who plays games, helps keep games going, gets for games what is needed. Sometimes, but not too often, the teacher is a rule arbiter.⁵⁷

Gene Stanford, Assistant Professor of Education at Syracuse University, feels that in order for a complex game like role-playing to succeed, students must be comfortable with each other.⁵⁸ He suggests first loosening up physically, by actually having a good arm wrestle, and playing name games, like those suggested by Viola Spolin and Mary Colvarios. The latter

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 34.

⁵⁷Stephen Dunning, "Scripting - A Way of Talking," The English Journal, Vol. 63, No. 6, Sept., 1974, p. 40.

⁵⁸Gene Stanford, "Why Role Playing Fails," The English Journal, Vol. 63, No. 9, December, 1974, p. 50.

suggests that the teacher take the same risks as the student by becoming an active participant in all the games.⁵⁹

Dan Donlan sees dramatic games as a means for preparing students for reading, as a kind of necessary warm-up. He suggests students break into pairs and throw imaginary balls back and forth. Then they are to imitate the behavior of various animals. Next they are to form various geometric patterns like circles and triangles. From here they move on to pantomimed skits, then discussion of the skits, and this, Donlan believes, prepares them for reading.⁶⁰

Arlie Muller Parks, in her article, "Developing Educational Games for Use in Speech Communication, Language Arts, and Theatre Courses", states that the value of games as an instructional strategy has been the subject of a seven-year research project at Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools. Their research indicates that the effectiveness of a game for producing changes in either attitudes or behavior depends on the degree to which the game requires the players to employ knowledge or skills related to the attitude or behavior.⁶¹

⁵⁹Mary Colvarios, "The Development of Classroom Workshops in Oral Communication," The English Journal, Vol. 63, No. 9, December, 1974, p. 55.

⁶⁰Dan Donlan, "Drama and The Three Stages in the Teaching of Literature", The English Journal, Vol. 66, No. 2, February, 1977, p. 74.

⁶¹Arlie Muller Parks, "Developing Educational Games for Use in Speech Communication, Language Arts, and Theatre Courses", (Houston: Speech Communication Association), 1975, p. 3.

The above article was written especially to describe a procedure for making educational games as instructional strategies in speech communication, language arts, and theatre arts courses. The procedure described in the article has apparently been successfully uses by undergraduate students enrolled in the speech and theatre methods course at Mansfield State College.⁶²

In the article, Parks provides some guidelines for designing games:

1. It should play quickly and should require the player to remain mentally and physically alert.
2. It should be fun to play, but it must have a purpose. That purpose is either helping the player to achieve the behavioral objective of the teacher, or testing the player to see if he can already meet that objective.
3. If the game is a simulation, it should accurately reflect that part of the communication or theatrical system which it represents.⁶³

In addition to making learning fun by playing carefully defined educational games, the actual designing of games can become an educational activity for motivated students. Parks concludes her article by stating that if games are designed along the guidelines she provided, the classroom teacher will find that the games will more closely fit the needs of his students.⁶⁴

⁶²Ibid., p. 3.

⁶³Ibid., p. 12.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 14.

This chapter will conclude with a brief discussion of the uses and limitations of games.

Goodman describes the learning and discovery that emerges from a game in spite of its not being real:

Games involve an experience which is dramatic without being decisive. The players in addition to having freedom to discover ends not predetermined, also have the freedom which comes from the tentativeness of the gaming situation. Although the game is exciting, involving enraging even, it is never 'for real'.... He (the player) experiments with the environment to discover the rule for himself...he acquires an education through a process of discovering himself.⁶⁵

A game is only as good as the perception of the designer.

A game is psychologically limited in that it is never considered as real. Most important, the game is greatly limited if the players are not carefully oriented about the rules.⁶⁶

It is the intention of the writer to provide several game samples in order to demonstrate the importance of a game's design, limitations, and rules. This will be outlined in the following chapter.

⁶⁵F. L. Goodman, "In Introduction to Virtues of Gaming", in P. J. Tansey (editor) Educational Aspects of Simulation, (London: McGraw-Hill), 1971, pp. 28-30.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 49.

CHAPTER 3

TWENTY SELECTED GAMES

Introduction: Criteria for Selection

The games which are about to be described represent only a portion of all the games that were actually used throughout the course. The teacher-director had selected these games because they coincided with the philosophy upon which the game methodology was based. Furthermore, these games were among those selected for evaluation by the students.

The instructional procedures outlined later in this chapter were designed as a demonstration of how the definition of game is practically applied. The procedures were organized into three phases: 1) Preliminaries; 2) Basic Game Elements, and 3) Application - The Games.

Preliminaries

Since students had to have some knowledge of games and workshop procedures before any meaningful work could be attempted, the following preliminary steps were taken:

Introduction to the Drama Class: This introductory work was done by using a name game. Students were asked to get into a circle and to introduce themselves by stating their names clockwise in the circle. This was repeated in a counter-clockwise fashion. Next they were told to move out of the

circle and to introduce themselves to someone they didn't know until they had spoken to everyone present. Once completed, they returned to their circle, called out their name twice in a clockwise direction, and then everyone was told to introduce the person on their right to the rest of the group, and then the person on their left.

Orientation to the First Exposure Exercise: This exercise is carefully outlined in Viola Spolin's book, Improvisation for the Theatre. Students should have an introduction to the exposure exercises if they are going to be able to 'create' reality and grasp acting problems.

The group was divided into halves. One half was sent to stand in a single line across the front of the class or stage, while the other remained in the audience. Both groups - audience and on-stage - were told to observe the other. Once discomfort set in, and discomfort was almost always guaranteed, the on-stage group was told to accomplish a certain task, like counting to themselves the number of lights on the ceiling. As soon as they showed signs of the discomfort disappearing and bodily relaxation setting in, the groups were reversed.

Once the second group had completed the exercise, both groups sat together for a questioning session:

1. How did you feel when you were first standing on stage?
2. How did the actors look when they first stood on stage?
3. How did your stomach feel?
4. How did you feel when you were counting the _____?
5. What happened to the (answers from 2 and 3)?

The teacher explained some of the workshop procedures:

- 1) games represented the means by which the students solved problems which affected their own lives;
- 2) everyone had to abide by the rules of the game;
- 3) there was no right or wrong way to solve a problem provided the rules were followed;
- 4) participation within the given roles of the game had to be complete;
- 5) it would be a sharing situation where individuals would give and take instead of someone dominating all the time;
- 6) the point of concentration was given by the teacher, and
- 7) evaluation of the game and its elements were handled by all participants, not just the teacher.

Basis Game Elements: Each of the twenty games described in this chapter contain seven integral elements, which were designed to help the student understand and evaluate the games more easily. Students were made aware of the purpose, or point(s) of concentration of each game. It was necessary to look at the procedures for action so that the sequence of events were clear. The rules which governed the action were of utmost importance, because the slightest infringement of the rules would cause the game to be terminated. The number of required players was a factor that presented no difficulty. Participant roles were described so that students could see what was expected of them. Participant interaction patterns were described to give the student a picture of grouping within the game process. Interaction patterns were intra-individual, extra-individual, aggregate,

inter-individual, unilateral, multi-lateral, intra-group, and inter-group. Values or results of the game were dealt with following the conclusion of the game.

Application - The Games

Game One - Thirty Seconds Free Mime (Free - chosen by the student)

Purpose: To discover some of the problems inherent in using mime to communicate.

Procedures: The class sat in a circle on the floor. The teacher-director asked for a volunteer to begin thirty seconds of free mime while the others observed. The student to the right of the volunteer counted to thirty to himself and then began his thirty seconds free mime. The game continued until all had a turn.

Rules: No sounds at all. As much space as was necessary was used by the student. Observation of the player was required.

Number of Players: Full group, but one at a time.

Roles: One actor (player); the rest were observers.

Participant interaction patterns: Intra-individual. This meant the action occurred within the individual actor.

Game Two - Dialing a Telephone

Purpose: To discover problems in directed mime.

Procedures: Each member in the group dialed an imaginary telephone and then sat down upon completion of the exercise.

Rules: The student did not begin movement until he could "see" the telephone in his imagination.

Number of players: Full class.

Roles: All actors, no audience.

Participant interaction patterns: Intra-individual.

Game Three - Passing Imaginary Objects in a Circle

Purpose: The point of concentration in this game was to see more than one object being passed within a circle.

Procedures: The group was seated in a circle with enough space between each person so that objects could be passed back and forth. First, a basketball, then a hank of rope and a balloon were passed around from student to student in mime. Then the real objects were passed around to help reinforce seeing and feeling them. Finally, it was repeated with imaginary objects to check for improvement.

Rules: The "magic if" technique (discussed in Chapter 4 under Game Two) was applied so that objects could be seen clearly in the imagination. No speaking was allowed.

Roles: Actors and observers at the same time.

Participant interaction patterns: Inter-individual. This meant the action was experienced between two or more people.

Also intra-individual.

Game Four - Improvising with Reality

Purpose: To demonstrate that improvisation could focus on re-creating real life and be an enjoyable experience.

Procedures: The group sat in a circle. A volunteer was asked to state the particulars of a simple, real-life incident that recently involved him. Then the volunteer asked the person(s) next to him to portray one of the characters from his story. This person could ask any questions concerning the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE and WHY prior to the improvisation. After completion of the improvisation, the students switched roles.

Rules: The students chose something undramatic, without conflict, without complications, and recreated this situation with a second or third person, using whatever mime was necessary.

Number of players: Two at a time, three, if necessary.

Roles: Two actors; the rest were observers.

Participant interaction patterns: Inter-individual.

Game Five - Improvisation - Imagining the Second Person

Purpose: To focus concentration on seeing the second person in the imagination.

Procedures: The students sat in a circle, and individually, in a clockwise fashion, each was asked to take a real situation, non-dramatic, non-conflicting, and to imagine the second or third persons. Upon completion, he sat down. If no discussion followed, the next student began.

Rules: The actor did not begin unless he could see the second person, as was the rule in the Dialing a Telephone game. All objects were mimed, including the second and third persons.

Number of players: Full class, one at a time.

Roles: One actor; the rest were the audience.

Participant interaction patterns: Intra-individual.

Game Six - Mime - Tug-of-War

Purpose: To focus one's attention on giving the rope reality.

Procedures: The class was grouped in two's, and told to pick up an imaginary skipping rope, and to have a tug-of-war. Following this, they had a real tug-of-war. Then they recreated the real tug-of-war in mime exactly as it happened.

Number of players: Full class in two's.

Roles: Two opposing forces.

Participant interaction patterns: Inter-individual.

Game Seven - Mime - Centring in Portraying Characters

Purpose: To teach the student to focus through a certain part of the body, thus creating different character traits and personalities.

Procedures: A discussion was held prior to the game that would include a diagram of Michaelangelo's drawing of Man in the physical centre of a sphere, showing the man's arms and legs outstretched. The centre of the sphere pointed to the man's solar plexus, just above the stomach, about two inches beneath the surface. This was where universal man was thought to be situated, where the most vital organs and nerves were situated. A theory has evolved in many schools of acting that states an actor can psychologically imagine his centre to be a force in itself that will give him stage presence and power. Furthermore, the theory suggests that an actor can psychologically imagine this centre to be radiating energy from different locations on the body, and that he can do this at will, with enough practice.

After the discussion, the group was instructed to stand and move clockwise around the room listening for coaching from the director. As various parts of the body were called out, the student attempted to shift focus or centre on that part and move about accordingly, imagining that that body part was leading him along.

Rules: The student was kept moving, regardless of how long it took him to shift from one body part to the other. He did not speak, nor stop moving, but concentrated fully on feeling the shift of energy move around at will.

Number of players: Full class.

Roles: All were players.

Participant interaction patterns: Intra-individual.

Game Eight - Improvisation - The Three Little Pigs

Purpose: To teach the student how to improvise with simple subject matter and certain given circumstances.

Procedures: A discussion preceded the game which included further implications of the meaning of improvisation, with regard to understanding what was meant by the terms "given circumstance", "fixed element" and "improvisational element". These terms will be explained along with the results of this game in Chapter 4.

The class was instructed to divide into fours representing the main characters of the story, one wolf and three pigs, and to improvise the story based upon certain given information. All groups worked at the same time, reached an ending, and sat down upon conclusion.

Rules: Whatever was given information was designated a fixed element or given circumstance, and it could not be changed by the group. Whatever the group made up on their own was designated an improvisational element.



Given by the teacher: WHO - PIG ONE - House of straw
 WHO - PIG TWO - House of wood
 WHO - PIG THREE - House of bricks
 WHO - WOLF - Hungry for pig meat

WHERE - House one to two to three

WHEN - Over a period of one day

WHAT - Pigs were to avoid being caught by wolf and, if possible, kill him.

To be improvised by groups:

Why did the pigs leave home on their own?
 How are you going to show this?
 How are you going to deal with the wolf?

Number of players: Four per group.

Roles: Pig or wolf.

Participant interaction patterns: Inter-individual.

Game Nine - Picture Frame Mime

Purpose: To expand the use of the five senses in a highly controlled game of mime.

Procedures: The group formed a circle and spread out at arm's length. Each student selected any object-oriented movement that would involve at least thirty seconds or more. The first student to volunteer made a one-second movement, froze, and then the student to his right began his one-second movement, and the game continued around the circle in this manner. The student waiting for his turn looked out of the corner of his eye in order to determine when his turn was. The original player remained in perfect tableau awaiting the opportunity to begin his second one-second movement. This procedure involved the entire group for about twenty revolutions.

Rules: No physical movement between tableaux except for eye-to-eye contact. Only a movement that involved the body moving in any one direction was to be allowed.

Number of players: Two or more.

Roles: Players, no audience.

Participant interaction patterns: Intra-individual and inter-individual.

Game Ten - The Third Person Game - Story Theatre

Purpose: To demonstrate how the student goes from the story narrative to the enactment (the acting out of the story in the present) using the third person pronoun.

Procedures: Each student thought of a real or imaginary story or incident that he might know well enough to "show and tell", and stood before the others to present it, playing all the necessary characters.

Rules: Each student began his story with "Once upon a time there was..." in order to start off using the third person. He played all characters within the story and switched smoothly from one to the other. The present tense was used only when handling the narrative.

Roles: One actor; the rest were the audience.

Number of players: One at a time.

Participant interaction patterns: Intra-individual and inter-individual.

Game Eleven - Basic Transformation Game - Object One to Object Two

Purpose: To teach the student how to control his creative improvisational and mime skills by transforming imaginary object into other objects.

Procedures: Prior to this game, students were informed that the room was filled with "space stuff", imaginary material that could be found everywhere in the room, capable of being moulded into any desired shape or object. Then the students were asked to spread out randomly throughout the room, locate some of this "space stuff" and mould an imaginary object. Once this object was created and was real for the player, he attempted to transform it into another object by re-shaping, re-moulding, stretching and squeezing. Students who finished sooner than others transformed their second object into a third, or fourth, if necessary, until all had completed at least two transformations.

Rules: No transformations took place unless the first created object was very real for the player, that is, until all five senses were truly at work to sustain this creation. Similarly, object two did not go through any transformation stage until it, too, reached the same level of reality that object one did.

Rules: All players.

Number of players: Full class.

Participant interaction patterns: Intra-individual.

Game Twelve - Picture Climax Game

Purpose: To test the student's understanding of the term 'climax', and the student's ability to use tableau to demonstrate that understanding.

Procedures: The students divided into groups of four or five, chose a well-known fairy tale, told the story within the group, picked the central characters and created a tableau of the climax of that story. Then, when the teacher told them, they broke out of the tableau and came to life and completed that story. Students in the audience were asked to state whether or not they felt the actors looked as if they were a physical part of the tableau before the actors were allowed to continue with the story, and then to guess from which story they thought the tableau was chosen.

Rules: The tableau of the climax had to be motionless, like a photograph in a story-book, complete with facial expressions.

Number of players: Five to a group.

Roles: Chosen by students according to needs of the story.

Participant interaction patterns: Inter-individual and inter-group.

Game Thirteen - Sound and Movement Game

Purpose: To help the drama student improvise his mime and transformational skills by breaking down known patterns and self-consciousness.

Procedures: The students were asked to form two lines, A and B, on opposite sides of the classroom. One student from A began

the game by creating an original sound accompanied by an original body movement. He moved slowly across the room towards somebody in line B. As soon as the person in B realized that he was to be chosen, he imitated exactly A's sound and movement. When imitation was exact, A and B switched places, and B moved across the room using A's sound and movement, transformed gradually until he reached line A with a new sound and movement. The game continued in this manner until everyone had at least one or two turns.

Rules: During the process of imitation of another person's sound and movement, the student strove for exact duplication of his partner. Transformation had to be smooth.

Number of players: Full class.

Roles: From actor to audience.

Participation interaction patterns: Inter-individual and intra-individual.

Game Fourteen - Gibberish

Purpose: To help the speaker co-ordinate voice and body so that he is in control at all times.

Procedures: A discussion preceded the game wherein an explanation of the use of gibberish, the language of unshaped sounds, was given. Following this step, the teacher not only gave instructions for students to divide into pairs, but also accepted a given WHO, WHERE and WHAT, and arrived at an agreed-upon topic of discussion. They were two friends who had not seen each other for some time, and they stopped for coffee at Eaton's.

All groups worked at the same time, to help prevent self-

consciousness setting in and allowed the teacher to move around freely from group to group, observing difficulties and successes. The conversation was as natural as possible, and continued until the teacher had heard from all groups.

Rules: When the teacher shouted "English", the groups switched from gibberish to English as smoothly and abruptly as possible.

Concentration was not broken.

Number of players: Full class in pairs.

Roles: All actors.

Participant interaction patterns: Inter-individual.

Game Fifteen - Climax Tableau - Whole Story Play-Making

Purpose: To enable the student to experience a sense of continuity in the planning and presentation of an entire play.

Procedures: The students formed into groups of about five, chose a fairy tale that the class had not looked at previously, agreed upon the climax scene, planned it, presented it in tableau, and then transformed physically and smoothly from this climax tableau scene back to the beginning and let the entire story unfold.

Rules: Any errors were covered up by using the third person narrative technique explored earlier. Students remained in character. Groups needing more characters than they had players, had their players play two or more parts.

Number of players: Three groups, five to a group.

Roles: Chosen by students at random.

Participant interaction patterns: Inter-individual.

Game Sixteen - The Aesop Game

Purpose: To use the Aesop game to help examine problems in real life situation.

Procedures: The teacher played a two-minute recording of the story of "The Fox and the Grapes". Then the class acted out the story in mime. After this the class formed groups of their choice, and applied the moral from the Aesop fable to a more realistic interpretation in an improvisation, using dialogue.

Rules: No talking during the miming of the fable. The improvisations were serious in nature.

Number of players: Full class.

Roles: Chosen by students.

Participant interaction patterns: Inter-individual.

Game Seventeen - Control Game

Purpose: To give students an opportunity of directing one another in a non-theatrical fashion.

Procedures: The class divided into pairs, A and B. For two minutes, A dictated all of B's reactions, and then switched so that B dictated all of A's actions.

Rules: B did what A told him, but within reason. However, B was able to do whatever he or she wished in between A's commands.

Number of players: Pairs, full class.

Roles: Director and actor.

Participant interaction patterns: Inter-individual.

Game Eighteen - Picture Album Game

Purpose: To demonstrate how people can become pre-occupied with capturing life and storing it in albums.

Procedures: The students chose their own groups and discussed family albums. Then they created a fictitious family whose highlights they portrayed over some thirty to forty years, using the tableau technique as a means of having a large picture in an album capable of coming to life. With the use of a narrator speaking in the third person, the group demonstrated how the family overdid the taking of pictures.

Rules: Whenever the group formed a tableau, there was no movement until the narrator allowed it.

Number of players: One group presenting at a time.

Roles: Chosen by students.

Participant interaction patterns: Inter-individual.

Game Nineteen - The Professions Game

Purpose: To enable the students to learn more about the aspirations of their fellow classmates as well as learn more about the different professions in society.

Procedures: The class was informed a week prior to the Professions Game that they should give some serious thought about their plans for the future, and, if possible, do some research on various occupations and professions. The guidance teacher was prepared to receive students during drama classes prior to the beginning of these games in order to offer any necessary assistance. On the day of the first Professions Game, the class

divided into two groups: players and audience. One student from the players volunteered to be first. The rest of the players became the actors for his professional world. He stood up and told them of their duties, and how he was linked with their activities. Then the game began with the other half of the class observing. The game continued until the "professional" was satisfied he and his players had achieved a sense of reality and order within the occupation. Then, following any discussion, a player from the observers volunteered his or her profession, and the two halves of the class switched roles from actors to audience.

Rules: The students were serious in their roles, and if they were not quite sure of their duties in the professional's world", they asked for help in the role as character to character, and not as student to student. The professional attempted to provide as many varied yet applicable activities for his co-workers as possible.

Number of players: Half of the class at a time.

Roles: Players: allotted by the professional.
Audience were the observers.

Participant interaction patterns: Inter-individual.

Game Twenty - Dodgeball and the Real World (Using a real ball)

Not only did dramatic games evolve from the areas of mime, improvisation and play-making, but also from pre-established sources. For example, the game Dodgeball was often used not only as a warm-up but also as a means of looking at the real world.

Procedures: The class was divided into halves. One half remained on the inside of a large circle formed by the other half.

When the teacher said "go", the team on the outside started throwing the ball at the people on the inside of the circle. If a person on the inside was hit, he was out of the game. He tried to dodge the ball without running outside of the periphery of the outer circle of students. The game continued until all inside members of the team had been struck out. Then the teams switched roles. The team that lasted the longest on the inside of the circle were the winning team. The teacher kept time. After the game, both halves divided into smaller groups and started planning parallels between this game and the real world in the form of improvisations.

Rules: If the ball touched a student without anyone else seeing it, he was expected to admit to it and go out of the circle.

Number of players: Full class, two halves.

Roles: Two opposing forces.

Participant interaction patterns: Inter-individual.

The foregoing twenty games were selected because of their anticipated effectiveness in achieving the aims of the course. The observations, responses and results of these games will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

OBSERVATION OF CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE

Introduction

The main purposes of this study were first to set forth instructional procedures for a game approach to teaching dramatic arts, and, second, to test the feasibility of the approach through classroom application and observation.

It should be stated that in the teaching of dramatic arts, process was definitely more emphasized than the final product. On a day-to-day basis, participants were observed making contributions in classes, and these observations were recorded by the teacher.

Observations and Results from the twenty selected games

A. Name Game - Students were smiling throughout the game yet displaying anxiety when it was their turn to concentrate on a name.

The majority of the group stated that this game was "challenging" and "enjoyable" at the same time, and that it was a "fun way to get acquainted".

The teacher inferred that they had unconsciously demonstrated one of the basic functions of drama - the developing of one's ability to concentrate - the first of many points on the circle to which Brian Way refers in Chapter 2.

B. Orientation Game - The student's answers to the fourth and fifth questions were often to the effect that they "felt better when they had something to do."

The teacher inferred that this "something to do" was focused energy that was referred to as the actor's Point of Concentration, the goal of every acting problem.

Game One - Free Mime - The observing students sensed an overall appreciation of the difficulties in mime because the problems were easy to detect by sight. Some of these visible problems included economy of movement, conservation of space, tension control, nervousness, and the need to learn to control bodies as well as minds. This control could only come from the player's ability to concentrate.

The inference about control led to a brief but important discussion about concentration, wherein it was stated that there were two main phases of concentration, relaxation and focus. Focus meant bringing all one's resources to bear on a single point, the purpose, or problem. The second important fact to come from the discussion was that the power of acting came from the ability of an actor to focus on the problem at hand. More important, it was generalized within the group that this statement could apply to life, and that all, or most, problems could be solved more easily if everyone had this ability to focus upon command or will. The mind had to be cleared first of distractions so that total consciousness could be focused on the problem. Students found that a clear mind was achieved through simple miming exercises such as raking, chopping and skipping.

Game Two - Dialing a Telephone - During the discussion following the game, many interesting problems and discoveries were recorded. Most students found it a "valuable yet frustrating" exercise. What they thought would be an easy piece of mime was actually a very "complex" series of actions if they could not see the telephone first in their imaginations.

Some students reported that they could only see the telephone in two dimensions rather than three. Others reported that they could sense temperature, but not texture. One student who could not do the exercise successfully said he tried to do it by simply remembering where his body would move if he were in front of his own telephone at home, but as soon as he reached for the imaginary receiver, it lost reality because he could not really "see" it.

The teacher-director suggested that they try to believe in what Constantin Stanislavski referred to as the "magic if". By this he meant that the actor should try to imagine what it would be like IF he were really dialing a telephone. The theory stated if you believed in the IF, your body would respond accordingly and would sustain the illusion.

This exercise of dialing the imaginary telephone appeared to have helped greatly in developing the student's respect for the art of mime.

Game Three - Passing Imaginary Objects - Judging from physical characteristics during intense concentration, it appeared to the teacher the students were working hard during the first passing of the imaginary objects. Some students were observed

closing their eyes once they received the imaginary object to help themselves "see" the object more clearly. Others were seen opening and closing their eyes during this time to enable themselves to gain control of their imaginations with their eyes opened, until the object started to fade. It appeared as if a conscious effort was being made to see the object rather than simply moving it, which at this time was of secondary importance.

The teacher remarked that stagework should not be based totally on planned movements, and that this game was one that would help to create an atmosphere for more complex stage games later on in the course.

While the imaginary objects were being passed around the circle, the teacher noticed the various ways by which students made acute observation of the object's physical characteristics, using all five senses.

One student remarked upon his having examined the individuality of an inanimate object for the first time that he could remember. Another mentioned that she had never considered a hank of rope being made up of smaller ropes broken down into strings and then into fibres.

When the imaginary objects made their second revolution, it appeared to the teacher that students' concentration was just as intense except for a noticeable relaxation appearing on many of their faces. The majority of students reported that they could now "see" the objects. Many had developed confidence in their ability to gain control or, at least, partial control, of

their imagination. A few had learned to "appreciate" the nature of things, in that not all hanks of rope were the same, nor were all basketballs constructed the same way. Observation and recall were agreed upon by the group to be two basic steps that a student of mime had to take in developing the imagination.

Game Four - Improvising with Reality - One of the good points to be said about establishing rules before each game is that it can help prevent a lot of time being wasted. No time was wasted explaining how jokes and distractions could ruin an improvisation because they had been ruled out from the very beginning of the game.

The majority of the class reported they were "surprised" with the fact that everyday life, when examined closely, could be "so interesting". What some had expected to find boring turned out to be very enjoyable. The simple, straightforward recreation or imitation of a real-life experience was deemed by the group to be worth looking at, especially when it helped them learn a little more about each other's out-of-the-classroom life.

A simple purchase by one student of an object at the local 7-11 store proved to be most entertaining, despite the fact that the student had not anticipated such a response. He had gone to the store to order some flea powder, and the clerk had jokingly asked him if the powder was for him or the dog.

Game Five - Imagining the Second Person - The students remarked that they found this to be a worthwhile game because it helped them see the similarities and transition between this game and the Dialing a Telephone game. Their imagined characters often

resembled "photographs" rather than imaginary full-size characters. Others reported they saw only two-dimensional characters who disappeared whenever they turned sideways. Their greatest difficulty was maintaining control of this image, and all admitted that this difficulty had largely to do with the amount of concentration with which they were focusing. Those that did have success maintaining a clear image found it an exhausting experience. Other problems discovered in this game included actions like physically switching from one character to another in full view of the audience, changing voice to that of the second character's and remembering to switch back again, and maintaining consistent eye level with the imagined character.

Game Six - Tug-of-War - The teacher found that this was a valuable exercise for observing which students were focusing their energy and which were not. As soon as some of the students let the rope stretch between them, it showed two very important things. First, their concentration was minimal. Secondly, problems can be solved only through interaction and sharing with another player. No player could do this game alone. Students had an opportunity to see the physical signs of exertion on each other's faces, even after the imaginary experience, again reinforcing the need for belief in the "magic if" idea of Stanislavski's and the need for learning how to control the body along with the mind.

When the Tug-of-War game was repeated using two halves of the class instead of pairs, excitement was observed to be greater. The room was noisier, and when the thermostat was

checked, it was noted that the temperature rose significantly. The two groups battled it out using the imaginary rope, both groups equally anxious to win, but also trying to play by the game rules. Finally, the group desire to win was so intense on one side, that they "convinced" the other side it was losing, and a victory resulted. Moreover, it was observed that when this contest was repeated using a real rope between the two groups, the group which had lost the imaginary Tug-of-War, won the real contest.

Game Seven - Centering - Most students reported this to be difficult, requiring all of their abilities to focus their attention on different body parts. The chest focus was for most considered the easiest, because the heart was often associated with the main source of energy. However, shifting the energy focus to the hips, or knees, required considerable refocusing. The exercise also became humorous at times when concentration on shoulders was observed to create wrestlers and truckdrivers, legs created dancers and soldiers, hands created painters and swimmers, and hips created dancers and skiing victims.

One important observation was that some students became very uncomfortable as attention was drawn to their way of walking. One student who was very conscious of her posture was quite upset about this game, and was negative during the discussion that followed. Because this student did not have a good posture, it would seem that the game had proved to be too close to reality for her liking.

Despite the negative reaction of this one student, the

exercise did teach the students a technique that enabled them to further explore character types and traits. Moreover, it helped lead to further explorations of occupations and professions that became issues for later discussion within the classroom.

Game Eight - The Three Little Pigs - For most of the students, this turned out to be a worthwhile experience, because it enabled them to explore their imaginations and to remain free, yet secure within the given circumstances. Five completely different WHY's and HOW's were created, yet all groups solved the problem.

The students said that they were "amazed" at how many different solutions to the same problem evolved. One student remembered at the beginning of the course the teacher had stated there was no one right way to solve a problem, and that many solutions were possible provided that the rules were respected.

Not all five pig groups had left home for the same reason. Their WHY's varied from alcoholism to a desire for independence. Similarly, their HOW's were varied, ranging from eating the wolf for supper to sentencing him to life imprisonment.

The teacher noticed that the students were learning to understand the nature of the dramatic elements of a story or game, WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, and WHY, and the importance of allowing the students to solve the HOW. During the course, the HOW was never given to a student by a teacher, but it would remain the unknown in any acting problem. This unknown, this missing link, provided the incentive for the student to solve a creative problem without the threat of failure, provided that

all rules were obeyed.

The new, improvised elements, WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, and WHY provided a refreshing change, along with enjoyment and satisfaction, to the game of the Three Little Pigs. From that class on, whenever the title of some famous story, fairytale, or nursery rhyme was brought up in class, no longer did the expression, "Oh, we've done that one already" travel around the discussion circle.

Game Nine - Picture Frame Mime - Most students reported this to be one of the most frustrating games they had encountered during the entire course, due to the fact that it called upon their total ability to concentrate, and to sustain that concentration for what seemed to the players like a "very long time" until they could re-direct their senses. Some students admitted during the freeze, or tableau, their senses were working overtime and creating very real characteristics of the objects they were imagining at the time. Later, when the teacher stated that every position a mime artist took was a separate work of art in itself, they appeared to understand more clearly what was meant. During a tableau, a student had a good chance to zero in on the reality of the object(s) he was creating, its smell, taste, touch and temperature.

This game was also valuable in helping to demonstrate how important it was to preserve the reality of mimed objects, so that objects did not cease to exist simply because they were placed on an imaginary table. Instead, the actor was forced to

make contact with these imaginary objects for a longer time than he normally would in real life. Carelessness in mime, therefore, was almost totally absent during the exercise.

When this game was repeated a day later, each student was to take his or her own shower, making one-second movements starting with the removal of a robe or towel and the turning on of the water. This time, with the understanding that frustration was a known by-product of the game, the five senses were put to work and students were later able to report increased awareness of objects like soap, hot and cold water, the slipperiness of the bottom of the bathtub or shower stall, and the feeling of water splashing against their bodies as if it were actually happening.

Game Ten - Story Theatre - Although it took a little more than two classes to see these individual presentations, it proved worthwhile. The majority of students reported that they had learned best by direct experience, rather than by indirect experience.

Telling a story and acting it out was not an easy task. Combining enactment and narrative impressed most of the students, because they saw the use of the third person narrative as an excellent means of switching from one scene to another in their improvisational work, without having to stop and say, "Okay, now it's morning and scene two." Instead, this technique enabled them to say things like, "and then the two brothers, realizing their work was finished for the day, decided to go

home to sleep.... Eight hours later, after a refreshing sleep, the sun came up and they awoke". This approach to story-telling was a far more artistic use of time change than the former, and it was this control, this feeling that the student had over his surroundings, that made the whole game so valuable in their learning process.

Game Eleven - Transformation of Objects - This appeared to have been a good game to have introduced at this time in the student's development, because it truly represented the present strength of the improvisational skills of the player. Transformation games provided the student with the key to creative adjustment, the true test of an individual's ability to sustain control of the given circumstances. The students who were most successful in this basic game showed by their reactions of smiling that they had achieved an immediate sense of stability.

One student mentioned that this game was useful when he found himself in an embarrassing situation of mistaken identity, and through the process of transformation, he was able quickly to recover control and to repair whatever damage had occurred. Such a game also helped to develop one's spontaneity, the ability to make quick, controlled changes. Above all, the sense of continuity prevailed here, since objects changed but did not wholly disappear. One student reported that although the physical qualities of the imaginary objects created remained the same, he was quite surprised with the variety of objects that he had created.

Students who reported difficulty with the game said

they had been too preoccupied with thinking and planning ahead as to what the object could become to simply let their imagination and five senses take over and to work spontaneously.

Game Twelve - Picture Climax Game - This was a good game to determine which students had a clear concept of the term climax, and which did not. Only one of the groups had a serious problem communicating to the other groups their tableau of the climax of Hansel and Gretel. This was due to the fact that they did not all agree upon the climax and thus, having broken one of the rules of the game, they failed to communicate within the group as well as to the other groups.

This game also demonstrated their ability to use their mime economically, as they were allowed only one picture frame from an entire fairytale to tell the climax of an entire story. From this point on, the teacher had only to say "freeze" or "tableau" and from immediate observation of a student's mime, the teacher could see, by examining the posture, and facial expressions, which students were totally playing the game character.

Fairytales proved to be excellent media for games of this nature, because they were simple to learn yet challenging to perform. Despite their simplistic appearance, they also were seen to deal with violence, child abuse, neglect, divorce and many other common social problems in today's society. After having re-examined some of the fairytales performed in class, the student discovered that in some cases little pigs had been sent out

into the cruel world to seek their own fortune, that a wolf had been boiled to death, that children had been pushed into ovens to be baked alive and eaten, that wolves had their heads cut off by axes, and that mothers could have their children taken away from them (Rumpelstilzskin).

The students reported that fairytales have long prepared them with the understanding that the world is not all "peaches and cream", but a place where obstacles were continuously facing them.

Game Thirteen - Sound and Movement - A lot of nervous laughter preceded this game, but as it went on, most students found it an excellent means of overcoming that fear of "playing the fool". The game was structured enough that it provided an opportunity for exploration of an original sound and movement without too much self-consciousness. Concentration on having something definite to do prevailed, and the fear of looking foolish was somewhat suppressed. Certainly, some broke out laughing as they lost concentration, and realized what they looked like to others, but since there was safety in numbers, they continued.

This game helped to support the idea that the imagination is best reached through use of physical movement. It was not talent that created the imaginative sounds and movements; it was the releasing of the student's inner resources.

A by-product of this game was seeing the entire class coming closer together, because they had all gone through the same ordeal in close scrutiny of one another. The students

stated that games like this one, which help to build "trust and a feeling of togetherness", are valuable in a dramatic arts program.

Further discussion of the outcomes of this game brought out some interesting parallels with tribal dances and ancient drama religious rites.

Game Fourteen - Gibberish - This game proved to be beneficial in demonstrating spontaneous adjustment to a change; in other words, the art of improvisation.

With some students, transition from gibberish to English was very awkward. One student described his difficulty like "trying to shift gears without using a clutch."

Other students found it difficult not to laugh at these new sounds issuing from their mouths, and for a while, embarrassment prevented some groups from achieving full concentration. Furthermore, when one group began to laugh at themselves, a kind of chain reaction would set in and, eventually, several groups would break concentration and start to laugh.

The teacher-director must learn to accept that this laughter is a natural reaction to an unnatural process, and that work will usually follow once relaxation has set in. A good laugh in any tense situation can help to ease the pressure of the moment.

Some groups experienced little or no difficulty changing from one language to the other and were able to avoid laughter. Their observations revealed some of the goals of this game.

They found co-ordinating body and voice a challenging exercise. Shifting from one language back and forth without physically revealing a shift in inflection or meaning was not easy, and it took some smooth "clutching" to achieve success. Adjusting to the given circumstances, the true meaning of improvisation was definitely exemplified in this game.

It was interesting to observe that students having a definite trace of a foreign or ethnic accent often used a form of gibberish resembling that language, but that, upon questioning them, they stated that the mother tongue had occurred quite unconsciously.

Game Fifteen - Whole Story Play-making - Although this game took three and a half classes to complete, it was considered by most as well worth doing. The enthusiasm within the "play" motivated several members to find the appropriate costume, prop or make-up design in the storage area.

It was considered a good idea by all groups to begin with the climax and then to back to the beginning, for it gave them a definite goal in mind, something tangible that represented an important stage in the development of the play. Once they experienced difficulty, they merely thought quickly ahead to what "had" to happen in order for the story to "work", and then order was once more restored. In other words, they had adjusted to the given circumstances - they improvised when they found themselves having a problem.

When one group found itself in trouble because it had momentarily lost the order of events, one of the members of the group discovered how convenient the third person narrative was for getting out of the difficulty. In "The Princess Who Couldn't Laugh" group, three suitors were trying to make the princess laugh by telling her a funny story. In the planning stages, the group had decided upon three jokes with punch lines. The first two suitors managed to get their jokes across, but the third forgot the joke he was supposed to tell. Instead, he said, "The third suitor figured the princess was tired of hearing poor jokes, so he made a silly face instead... but that didn't make her laugh either." This was a good, spontaneous improvisational cover-up.

Game Sixteen - The Aesop Game - All three groups successfully applied the "sour grapes" theme of the fable to modern presentations.

One group used the situation of an ice-cream parlor famous for its fifty flavours. A customer had been excited thinking about his favourite flavour, but when he arrived he was told they were sold out of that particular one. He was heard saying, "Oh well, I didn't really need it."

Another group built their improvisation around the idea of a man seeking a promotion in a firm. When he learned that his promotion had been given to a woman, he was heard to say, "Oh well, who wants to work for an employer that believes in Women's Lib anyway."

Altogether, four classes were devoted to the use of this and other Aesop fables. The recordings were of good quality, and available from the Manitoba Department of Education Library.³⁷ The students appeared to enjoy listening to the fables, acting them out, and planning modern interpretations.

The teacher observed that looking at problems that exist in real life within the confinement of a drama class was best achieved when the class had reached a more sophisticated level of planning skills. Once the students had learned to work together and trust one another, they began to understand that the game was more than just a form of entertainment, but a means by which real life could be seriously examined.

Game Seventeen - Control Game - This game particularly helped to demonstrate problems that some people had in relating to others. For example, some were very casual and relaxed about ordering people around, whereas others were very uncomfortable and tense. The game also revealed a need for further privacy. Students reported that games like this might be used to help solve real life problems, or at least uncover them.

This control game was repeated as a warm-up for other classes and it was observed that the timid directors soon relaxed more into the game and felt less as if they were intruding.

³⁷Famous Classics, The Best in Children's Literature - Series 2, Bowmar Records, Inc., California.

Game Eighteen - Picture Album Game - Not only did the class discussions show how some people tend to take more pictures than necessary, but also they uncovered some interesting yet revealing by-products of picture albums. For example, a picture in an album of some couple smiling for what was really a disintegrating relationship.

The narrator was observed to be in total control in this game at all times. The previous game called Control had been a most appropriate warm-up.

The stage technique of having a still image come to life was compared to the television effect of focusing on a picture and then seeing it come to life.

The Picture Album game led to more complicated staging techniques, wherein two sides of the stage were used at the same time to show the past and the present. As an older couple was reminiscing at stage left, a group at stage right was acting out the old couple's memories in the form of tableau pictures capable of coming to life, reliving the memory, and then fading away by the use of proper dimming lights.

The majority of students reported that this game had helped them to get "inside older people" and understand their plight better than before.

Game Nineteen - Professions Game - This game, along with the research periods, lasted roughly from eight to ten classes. Each student needed about one-half an hour just to explore his

or her profession, and another half to three quarters of an hour to play it in class. The students reported this time was a valuable investment for they had learned considerably more about each other through these games as well as what constituted certain professions.

Even though these were grade ten groups who had explored their potential professions and occupations, some of the students were surprisingly well-informed, and the discussions which followed these games proved to be most interesting and revealing. Game Twenty - Dodgeball and the Real World - The Dodgeball game was good, clean, physical fun with excitement running high. Competition was fierce, and survival was of utmost importance. The mind and the body were working together.

The improvisations that sprang from the game of Dodgeball were powerful in meaning and in physical energy, dealing with maniacal homicide, volcanic eruptions, assassinations, and traffic jams.

The students observed that many of man's basic personality traits came out in game play, and that games did help to provide a healthy outlet for experiencing life.

Further games of tag, baseball, football, relays, and other sports proved to be valuable sources for warm-ups, as well as for improvisational material in drawing parallels with the real world. Some of the observations that came from discussions following these games are mentioned on the following page.

In a racing game, one tried to overtake; the other tried to stay ahead. In a chasing game, one tried to catch, tackle or tag; the other tried to outdistance, dodge and elude; In an attacking game, one tried to overcome a barrier, enter a guarded area, overpower a defence, injure; the other tried to defend an area or person, ward off assault by maneuver or force, and to be on guard. In a game of capture, one tried to take a person or symbol; the other tried to avoid being taken. In a game of harrassment, one tried to tease, taunt, lure to mistake; the other tried to see through the trick, and to punish the attackers. In a hunting game, one tried to find by chance or by clues; the other tried to hide by simple cover, by misleading clues and by feigning. In a rescue game, one tried to spring the prisoners, to be a saviour; the other tried to be a jailer, and to guard against the escape. In a game of persuasion and seduction, one tried to tempt another to a forbidden act; the other tried to resist temptation, and to control without being influenced.

In baseball, when someone breaks a rule, the empire stops the game and penalizes the violator. In society, when someone breaks a rule, the court stops the "game" and penalizes the violator. One student made an interesting observation that each game is like a microcosmic society in itself, complete with its purpose, procedures, rules, number of required players, roles, interaction patterns, and outcomes.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE

Introduction

The main purposes of this study were first to set forth instructional procedures for a game approach to teaching dramatic arts, and second, to test the feasibility of the approach through classroom application, observation and evaluation.

Following the completion of the course, students were given a final questionnaire and requested to evaluate the game approach within the dramatic arts program. Thirty participants completed the final questionnaire, in addition to the on-going evaluative questionnaires given at random throughout the course. Six of the thirty participants gave their answers to the final questionnaire in tape-recorded interviews, because of their expressed preference for oral rather than written expression.

Evaluation of the Seven Game Elements

Following is a summary of student responses to a checklist devised to help them evaluate a game in terms of its common elements - purpose, procedures, rules, number of players, roles of participants, participant-interaction patterns, and results according to values assigned to the outcome of action. This is

the rating⁶⁷ that was used:

- 1 = very effective
- 2 = good
- 3 = fair
- 4 = poor

The participant evaluated each element of the game by circling only one number in each section. A copy of this checklist with student responses is included in Appendix A.

For rating the game elements, "The Numbers Game in Analyzing fiction", was adapted. This exercise was used as a guide to determine what students considered was effective among the various elements of games, and to judge to what extent students recognized these components in the dramatic arts program.

Thirty students indicated their interpretation of the game elements in relation to the dramatic arts program. The results showed:

1. fourteen thought the purpose was very effective
2. nine decided that the purpose was good
3. six indicated it was fair, and
4. one rated the purpose as poor.

In procedures, the rating was as follows:

1. twelve indicated effective development of procedure
2. ten showed good procedure
3. five suggested fair, and
4. three checked poor.

The rating of rules was more polarized, as:

1. twenty-five gave rules the highest rating

⁶⁷Jone M. Starr, "The Numbers Game in Analyzing Fiction, in Classroom Practices", pp. 63-65.

2. two indicated it was good
3. one thought it fair, and
4. two thought the use of rules was poor

A summary of the rating of the number of students revealed that:

1. eighteen students indicated it was very effective
2. ten agreed it was good
3. one rated the number of players as fair, and
4. one suggested it was poor.

With regard to roles of participants, rating showed:

1. sixteen thought roles were very effective
2. nine decided that the roles were good
3. three indicated it was fair, and
4. two rated the roles as poor.

Participation interaction patterns received a rating indicating:

1. thirteen students thought it very effective
2. twelve agreed it was good
3. three suggested it was fair, and
4. two found it poor.

The rating of outcomes in terms of values was quite polarized, as:

1. twenty-six gave outcomes the highest rating
2. two indicated it was good
3. one thought it fair, and
4. one thought the outcomes were poor.

Discussion of Results of Seven Game Elements

Based on the results of game element evaluation, the majority of students indicated that the use of the game elements

in evaluation helped to give them a further understanding of games in relation to real and simulated life-experiences.

Students attached more importance to the first game element, purpose, than they had at the beginning of the course. By the end of the course, students were critically assessing the value of a game in terms of its purpose alone. Twenty-three students liked the idea of examining purpose as one of the game elements. One expressed her dislike because she felt that she should be free enough to decide what the purpose of the game was for herself, and she was often reluctant to comment on this aspect of rating games.

The obvious implications of procedures being a necessary element in rating games were accepted, although not without some hesitancy on the part of three students, who rated this element as poor. Their reason for this was due to the fact that they became poor concentration subjects during this stage of introducing a game, due to restlessness created by anticipation of the game to come.

On the other hand, rules received a high rating of effectiveness, largely due to the fact that if a participant was observed to be slack in his management of rules, it affected his status within the class, and often led to rejection. No game could be taken seriously as long as participants did not take the rules seriously. Rules were perhaps the most important element to be considered in games since all resultant behaviour of individuals followed the laws that were set down for the participants.

In interpreting the elements of number of players, roles of participants and participant reaction patterns, findings were fairly similar in terms of majority and minority breakdown. Most students believed these were worthwhile elements in determining positive or negative aspects of games.

Students attached greatest importance to the rating of outcomes in terms of values, because it forced them to look critically at the entire game process. What a student got out of a game depended largely on what he put into the game, and certain games had more to offer than others. There was strong indication that students understood the game process better after involvement in group discussions of ratings of outcomes. On the rating scale, twenty-six participants indicated rating of outcomes in terms of values cleared up many uncertainties about the game.

Questionnaire

Below is a summary of student responses to the questions, indicating a general reaction to the approach, group participation, understanding the game and its elements:

1. twenty-six of the thirty participants expressed satisfaction with the game;
2. twenty-seven of the thirty liked themselves in the game;
3. twenty-eight found the game fun;
4. twenty-five felt the game had the right number of rules;

Questionnaire (continued):

5. twenty-one felt they would like to play the game again;
6. twenty-seven felt the game represented a real-life experience;
7. twenty-three felt the game could be played more imaginatively;
8. twenty-four thought the game could become part of a story;
9. twenty-five felt there were enough players for the game;
10. twenty-six liked their roles in the game;
11. twenty-four liked the roles enough not to have changed;
12. twenty-five found the outcome satisfactory;
13. twenty-four did not mind losing;
14. twenty-six felt they were fully concentrating;
15. twenty-four felt they were co-operating all the time;
16. twenty-six of the thirty participants expressed satisfaction with games as a teaching methodology;
17. twenty-seven would recommend it for other students;
18. twenty-six preferred this method of studying dramatic arts to the learning acting techniques method.

Discussion of Results of Questionnaire

In general, the participants responded favourably to the approach and, although there were some negative reactions to parts of the program, the students seemed to believe that the game methodology was effective in learning about real and simulated life situations.

Some of the reasons given in favour of the game approach included statements such as, "it was exciting"; "it was a new way of looking at life"; "it made me feel younger and older at the same time"; "I learned a lot about myself and others in a game situation".

Among the benefits derived from the approach, students remarked that, "it was easier to look at life as a big game made up of little games, each one just as serious as the other"; "it helped me to see what kind of person I am in fun games and serious games"; "I have more respect for all kinds of games now"; "I learned about how serious life can be, but in a fun kind of way"; "there is more to games than I thought"; "I became more aware of others and their roles than I was before".

In response to the questions on group games, students suggested that they learned how to work better in groups, that sharing was easier as well as more fun, and that they could learn more because each person brought his or her personality into the game, without holding back as people do in more traditional settings.

Suggested changes in the approach reflected personal preferences. The comments included, "some more attention should be paid to games of children all over the world"; "there should be more discussion about games people play (referring to Eric Berne's book, Games People Play)"; "we need more time to make up new games". Eighteen students indicated no other changes. Some liked the approach as it was while others could not think of alternatives.

Taped Interview

The six students who participated in the tape-recorded interview were asked to give their frank opinion in response to the questions. The interview was very informal and reflected similar comments to those on the written questionnaire. Most of the questions and responses, however, pertained to each student's particular game analysis of a real-life situation. After the first question, "What is your opinion of the dramatic arts program?", the pattern progressed to the student's response.

Discussion of Results of Taped Interviews

The general feeling was that the approach was interesting and different from technique-oriented drama programs. Students said it was a change from merely memorizing scripts and learning little about the characters' experiences. They felt that with the game approach, they were able to learn different things about each other. All six felt that the group and individual activities helped them to better understand the game

as a teaching methodology. Two of the students suggested they would use this approach during the summer while working with children in workshop situations.

Investigator's Comments

The use of time was an important factor within the framework of this course. Most students used their time economically.

Games increased motivation, and with motivation came a considerable amount of heightened activity and noise. The investigator was satisfied that meaningful learning was taking place as students worked against time and space in order to plan, play and evaluate results. Personality traits and conflicts came out into the open during these sessions and students learned about each other directly, rather than indirectly. Students who were normally shy were placed in a position wherein personal involvement was not a threat but a pleasure, and this helped them lessen and, in some cases, overcome their shyness.

The investigator found that constant class and small group discussions were beneficial in bringing about one of the goals of the game approach - to motivate learning about real life.

The improvisations and play-making sessions which resulted from the game approach indicated a much freer expression of personal creativity. They clearly indicated that the method of instruction had some effect on the imagination. This was especially reflected in students' ability to make an entire play given only a word as a stimulus.

One of the most positive aspects of the game approach

was the group experience. While working towards common goals, participants were constantly sharing and co-operating with each other. Naturally, some individuals did more work than others, and some students were quick to frown upon this enthusiasm. From class and group discussions, however, this negativism soon changed to acceptance and realization that whether there is individual or group work going on, some students are always willing to do extra work.

Although the students appreciated the fact that the twenty games provided much variety and minimal boredom, little enthusiasm for analysis of the basic elements of the game was shown. Furthermore, the choice of a poor game by the investigator led to a negative response by some students, as was the case with the game dealing with posture.

On the whole, the students were co-operative participants. Their level of maturity, freedom of suggestion and willingness to experiment led to many evaluative responses which have proved most helpful in the assessment of the game approach.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This study has established and evaluated instructional procedures for a game approach to the study of dramatic arts. Procedures were developed from a review of the theories of dramatic education, and games in the teaching of dramatic arts.

The evaluation investigated the effectiveness of the methodology in putting the theory into practice and in providing a meaningful study of dramatic arts. The major conclusions and the implications of these conclusions are presented below.

CONCLUSIONS

This study found that the twenty selected games were most representative of the methodologies of Viola Spolin and Brian Way, who state that there must be clear lesson plans for organizing meaningful individual and group activities. The instructor must have a clear concept of a game in order to help students relate games to their own lives. The instructor must have a working knowledge of acting technique-oriented drama programs in order to allow for comparison and contrast of methodologies.

Because students repeatedly reported the game approach to be a motivating device by providing for varied interests and learning styles, it can be seen, as stated earlier in Review of Literature in Avedon and Sutton-Smith's hypothesis, that students are more interested in simulation and real-life activities than in conventional activities.³⁹ Games are useful devices for getting and holding student interest and attention and this often led to increased student involvement without coercion.

Avedon and Sutton-Smith also suggested that students learn more by participating in games. This study supports their hypothesis with reference to the many positive statements recorded from the questionnaire. Much of the learning that the students reported taking place was an increased awareness of themselves and others, not only from involvement in the varied participant interaction patterns but also from the open, yet focused discussions which preceded and followed the game. The games allowed for more exploration of a human being in an enjoyable and practical manner, using direct rather than indirect experience. The students reported a higher degree of relevancy to their lives in this game-oriented drama course.

This study is significant to educators interested in developing the whole child for it has stressed the personal development of the student, physically, emotionally, intellectually and culturally. The responses from the questionnaire regarding such development support the significance of this study in that area.

³⁹Elliott M. Avedon and Brian Sutton-Smith, The Study of Games, p. 331.

The study supports the literature of Frank and Theresa Caplan in The Power of Play, of Eric Berne in Games People Play and of Jerome Singer in The Child's World of Make-Believe in concluding that games can be serious activities. The student responses from the questionnaire support this statement. Many students requested more time for the development of new games. This request supports Jerome Singer's findings that many students have a desire to explore life through games but need encouragement to do so.

The game approach could be a good aid to other disciplines because the above authors have not limited the use of games to drama classes. Not included in this study were many games based on other disciplines like mathematics and science. For example, students were asked to portray various atoms and other molecular structures by physically becoming them. The authors found that the achievement of skill in all human activities is dependent on practice, and that it is largely through games that students can achieve this practise.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM

Because the game approach contributed to the student enjoyment and understanding of games in dramatic arts, because it helped to encourage independent exploration, and because it helped to develop confidence and skill in oral expression, it is the opinion of the investigator that the approach could be profitably introduced into existing dramatic programs and drama units in English classes.

There are so many games from which to choose. Care must be taken to select those which are appropriate for students. Such games should allow for expansion into real-life situations. At the same time, some games may prove frightening and often seem too close to reality. Teachers should take care in their choice of 'questionable games', like the one dealing with personal posture, or others dealing with physically and mentally ill people.

The selection of simple games with few rules at the beginning would cut down on the amount of time spent on exploration and expansion, and this extra time could be spent on a fuller discussion of the basic elements of the game.

Although students in the high school have developed some ability in analytical skills, the analysis of games should not be overdone to the point where motivation to play games is lessened.

The game approach is flexible and can easily be adapted to teach other aspects in the area of communication, such as ballads, short stories, and narrative poetry. Some of the games not described in this study dealt with stories and ballads like the Alamo, whereupon students would mime the ballad while the narrator read.

The game approach can also be modified for longer or shorter periods of instruction. The approach, however, should be well organized to provide to maximum involvement of all students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since several writers reviewed in the second chapter have discovered certain benefits to be derived from a game approach to dramatic arts, it would seem that teachers could become more acquainted with the game approach, and possibly discover for themselves such benefits.

The investigator has found that the methodologies of Viola Spolin and Brian Way need practical demonstration in order for their philosophies to crystallize. More divisional in-service sessions and workshops in the game approach organized through the Theatre Arts Committee of the Department of Education could improve channels for promoting this approach.

In addition, members of this committee who set up the experimental courses, could be freed from regular classes to work directly with other teachers for the purpose of training. Once trained, these teachers could act as advisors within their respective school divisions working with teachers and students in organizing classroom programs. This would be much like the present use of music co-ordinators or physical education supervisors, for example, in many school divisions. These teacher-advisors would be fully trained in the use of games to simulate real-life material, and would be available as resource personnel to any teacher who wished to use this technique in his particular subject area. The advisor could work with teachers in setting up experimental inter-disciplinary projects. Most important, his function would be to stimulate interesting learning experiences.

The inclusion of a course on games as an interdisciplinary approach to motivating student learning in the teacher-training program at the Faculty of Education would also prove beneficial in promoting the use of games in drama courses as well as other subjects.

APPENDIX A

NOTE

Following is a summary of student responses to a checklist devised to help them evaluate a game in terms of its common elements.

RATING THE GAME ELEMENTS

I. PURPOSE

Response

- 14 1 Rating: PURPOSE is a very effective element in evaluation of the game;
- 9 2 Rating: PURPOSE is a good element in evaluation of the game;
- 6 3 Rating: PURPOSE is a fair element in evaluation of the game;
- 1 4 Rating: PURPOSE is a poor element in evaluation of the game;

II. PROCEDURES

- 12 1 Rating: PROCEDURES is a very effective element in evaluation of a game;
- 10 2 Rating: PROCEDURES is a good element in evaluation of the game;
- 5 3 Rating: PROCEDURES is a fair element in evaluation of the game;
- 3 4 Rating: PROCEDURES is a poor element in evaluation of the game;

III. RULES

- 25 1 Rating: RULES is a very effective element in evaluation of the game;
- 2 2 Rating: RULES is a good element in evaluation of the game;
- 1 3 Rating: RULES is a fair element in evaluation of the game;
- 2 4 Rating: RULES is a poor element in evaluation of the game;

IV. NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- 18 1 Rating: NUMBER OF PLAYERS is a very effective element in evaluation of the game;
- 10 2 Rating: NUMBER OF PLAYERS is a good element in evaluation of the game;
- 1 3 Rating: NUMBER OF PLAYERS is a fair element in evaluation of the game;
- 1 4 Rating: NUMBER OF PLAYERS is a poor element in evaluation of the game.

V. ROLES OF PARTICIPANTS

Response (continued):

- 16 1 Rating: ROLES OF PARTICIPANTS is a very effective element in evaluation of the game;
- 9 2 Rating: ROLES OF PARTICIPANTS is a good element in evaluation of the game;
- 3 3 Rating: ROLES OF PARTICIPANTS is a fair element in evaluation of the game;
- 4 4 Rating: ROLES OF PARTICIPANTS is a poor element in evaluation of the game.

VI. PARTICIPATION INTERACTION PATTERNS

- 13 1 Rating: PARTICIPATION INTERACTION PATTERNS is a very effective element in evaluation of the game;
- 12 2 Rating: PARTICIPATION INTERACTION PATTERNS is a good element in evaluation of the game;
- 3 3 Rating: PARTICIPATION INTERACTION PATTERNS is a fair element in evaluation of the game;
- 2 4 Rating: PARTICIPATION INTERACTION PATTERNS is a poor element in evaluation of the game.

VII. RATING OF OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF VALUES

- 26 1 Rating: RATING OF OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF VALUES is a very effective element in evaluation of the game;
- 2 2 Rating: RATING OF OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF VALUES is a good element in evaluation of the game;
- 1 3 Rating: RATING OF OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF VALUES is a fair element in evaluation of the game;
- 1 4 Rating: RATING OF OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF VALUES is a poor element in evaluation of the game.

APPENDIX B

NOTE

The following questions were administered at the end of the course and were designed to help the writer evaluate the game approach to teaching dramatic arts.

FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Following each question is a space provided for your responses.

DIRECTION: THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONNAIRE IS DESIGNED TO EVALUATE
THE GAME APPROACH USED IN TEACHING DRAMATIC ARTS.
PLEASE INDICATE YOUR PERSONAL RESPONSE TO EACH
QUESTION BELOW:

1. What is your opinion of the dramatic arts program?

Comments: _____

2. What do you think of the game approach in teaching dramatic arts?

Comments: _____

3. Do you prefer other methods of studying dramatic arts?

If so, explain. _____

4. What benefits do you think you may have gained from the
game approach to dramatic arts? _____

5. Was the quantity of work you were required to do satis-
factory or unsatisfactory? _____

6. What are some of the activities you found beneficial?

7. Did your understanding of yourself and others increase?
stay the same? Discuss. _____

8. What changes would you suggest if you were going to take a
similar course to this one? _____

11. Check (x) one of the following:

Were you satisfied at the end of the course that you learned:

- (a) more about yourself and others than you usually do
in other courses?
- (b) just as much as usual?
- (c) less than usual?
- (d) not sure?

12. Check (x) in which of the following ways the game approach
can be useful to students:

- (a) in providing opportunity for sharing experience?
- (b) in providing for individual expression?
- (c) in providing for student interests?
- (d) in providing for varying abilities among students?
- (e) other(s) (specify)

13. Did this approach lead you to do further thinking related
to games and real-life situations outside of class?

- yes
- no
- not sure

14. Use a check (x) to indicate if the 'game approach' gave you a better understanding of any of the following aspects of the dramatic arts program:

- (a) yourself
- (b) other students in the class
- (c) others outside the class (students, parents, family)
- (d) your physical environment
- (e) your cultural environment
- (f) your cultural heritage

15. Check (x) to indicate if the 'game approach' gave you a further development of any of the following skills in the dramatic arts program:

- (a) physical activities such as mime, pantomime
- (b) ability to concentrate
- (c) ability to create imaginatively
- (d) ability to reason with others logically
- (e) ability to express yourself clearly and concisely

16. Check (x) to indicate if the 'game approach' helped to promote the following aspects of the dramatic arts program:

- (a) self-discipline
- (b) emotional maturity
- (c) self-evaluation
- (d) a positive attitude toward all the arts
- (e) a sense of excitement and joy of learning
- (f) objectivity in dealing with problems of the immediate environment and of society at large.

17. Check (x) one of the following to indicate your response to each of the statements below:

___ (a) Games engender more student interest than the more conventional activities.

___ strongly agree

___ agree

___ not sure

___ disagree

___ (b) By participating in games, the students learn more than by studying in the conventional manner.

___ strongly agree

___ agree

___ not sure

___ disagree

___ (c) Students retain information learned in games longer than information presented through conventional methods.

___ strongly agree

___ agree

___ not sure

___ disagree

___ (d) Students acquire more critical thinking and decision-making skills by participating in games.

___ strongly agree

___ agree

___ not sure

___ disagree

____(e) Students' attitudes towards learning change by taking part in games. A positive change is implied.

____ strongly agree

____ agree

____ not sure

____ disagree

____(f) With the game approach to dramatic arts, students are more actively involved in the learning process.

____ strongly agree

____ agree

____ not sure

____ disagree

____(g) The 'game approach' provides for student participation in planning lessons.

____ strongly agree

____ agree

____ not sure

____ disagree

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