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WINDOWS TO IMAGINATION:
THE ART OF PUPPETRY

by

Anne McKinnon Gibson
B.G.S., Simon Fraser University, 1990

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS (EDUCATION)
in the Faculty
of
Education

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APPROVAL

Name: Anne McKinnon Gibson
Degree: Master of Arts
Title of Thesis: Windows to Imagination: The Art of Puppetry
Examining Committee:
Chair: Robin Barrow

Stuart Richmond
Senior Supervisor

~~Michael Manley-Casimir~~
Professor

Michael Ian Foster
Professor
Visual and Performing Arts in Education
The University of British Columbia
External Examiner

Date Approved August 10, 1992

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ABSTRACT

In what ways do puppets encourage and enable children to work imaginatively and creatively in an integrated arts setting? To answer this question this study draws educational implications from detailed pictures of classroom life, using an integrated arts project with puppets. Eisner's (1985) model of art criticism is used to focus the narrative vignettes, record judgements, and evaluate and interpret the educational experience firsthand.

The study is divided into scenarios. The educational criticism of each scenario comprises three major dimensions, based on Eisner's model:

- descriptive
- interpretative
- evaluative.

Following Eisner, the attempt is made "to create a rendering of a situation" (p. 179). In this rendering, a role has been assigned to the researcher -- that of "teacher/Wizard". As Wizard, the teacher operates as both observer and purveyor of "magic" (imagination). The study thus conveys a strong sense of the creative setting in which imagination is freed and encouraged to flourish.

The narrative format avoids the use of technical jargon, which may obscure *what actually happens* in the classroom. The study presents a particular perspective on the reality of an environment where children who think freely, achieve much of what they wish to know, and their educators wish them to learn.

Students are observed as they work and play imaginatively in both a structured and unstructured way. The observer notes changes that occur on a continuum -- from inhibition and self-consciousness to creativity, imagination, communication, sense of fun, self-confidence and self-discipline.

Interspersed throughout this study are children's comments about what they are doing. In making an academic interpretation of the educational experience, these comments allow us to continuously assess its success from the children's point of view.

Implications from the study are used to develop a rationale and a set of practical suggestions for using puppets in the classroom.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to
my family and my 1992
class of grade three
and four students.

QUOTATION

Mountebanks and ministers, anthropologists and aborigines, philosophers and Philistines have long been entranced by the world of puppetry -- by the special mystery of objects made live.

Set into motion by the simplest of means -- hands, rods, strings -- the animated object becomes a puppet not when the operator assumes complete control of it, but at the infinitely more subtle moment when the object seems to develop a life force of its own. This life force that puppeteers create and discover within their objects lends credibility to the magical and fantastical transformation of objects into creatures. (Malkin, 1980, p. 9)

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INTRODUCTION

The Tradition of Puppetry

Puppetry is a very old traditional art form found in many countries. It probably started in prehistoric times. A caveman and cavewoman, stretched out by a blazing fire, turned their heads and noticed a curious phenomenon: shadows dancing on the cave walls. Intrigued, they lifted their arms, arched their wrists and began flapping their fingers against their thumbs in mock imitation of some dreamed-of dragon. The other cave dwellers were immediately enthralled, and thus began the first puppet show. "This art of the miniature figure of drama grips the adult as a means of satisfying man and woman's instinctive creative urge" (Wall, White & Philpott, 1965, p. 42).

From earliest times, human beings have used puppetry as a window to their imaginative yearnings. The small figures have been found in Egyptian tombs over three thousand years old. They were used in the religious rituals of ancient Greece and Rome, and puppet shows were recorded as having been produced in Greece in the 5th Century B.C.

The early histories of India, China, Japan, Java, and Burma reveal an enduring love of puppets. In 18th Century Japan, the *Joruri*, or puppet play, was the most lavish in the world. Human actors learned their art by first watching the puppet shows. In Java, the movements of human dancers imitate the Javanese puppets' motions.

According to Weiger (1974), during the European Medieval period, puppets provided religious drama first, then moved into entertainment with tales of folk tradition, stories about chivalry, and satirical plays. This is where comedy really began, and following this movement, came Italy's *Kasperl*; Turkey's *Karaghiz*, *Commedia dell'Arte's Punchinello*, *Harlequin and Columbine*; and England's *Punch and Judy*. Each country developed its type of puppets from its own cultural past. Thus, the fool, clown, jester, and buffoon became a lovable, favourite, universal character.

Haydn composed operas, Shaw wrote plays and George Sand founded a theatre with puppets. Puppet shows were often mentioned in literature, as with, for example, Henry Fieldings' *Tom Jones*. The diarist, Samuel Pepys, was an enthusiastic "puppet-goer" and made critiques of all the shows he saw.

Weiger (1974) explains how puppetry in Europe has a long and honourable history, with permanent theatres and support from the government. It is an art form in its own right, designed for adults, and reaches a high level of artistic achievement. It has been a medium for political and social satire, high tragedy and comedy, opera, ballet, and burlesque.

Because there has not been an indigenous tradition of North American puppetry, there is a vast difference in how the art developed in North American contemporary culture. Yet before the white man's arrival in the New World, the Indians of New Mexico and the northwest coast were using puppets in religious ceremonies.

In the 16th Century Cortez brought the first known European puppeteer with him during the conquest of Mexico, and Spanish puppeteers spread through Mexico and South America. During the 19th Century, immigrants from various European countries brought along some of their puppet heritage and the tradition was continued mainly at the domestic level, until the art form dwindled in popularity around 1900.

By 1915, however, the Yiddish puppet theatre of Maude and Cutler, led a puppetry revival which had international appeal; Tony Sarg, Tatterman Company, Raymond O'Neil, Ellen Von Vockenburg, and Remo Bufano were others involved in the art's resurgence. In 1915 Tony Sarg, an illustrator of children's books and a collector of old toys brought puppetry from England to the United States and the art gained wide popular appeal. Sarg had developed an interest in the puppet theatre form. By 1927, he was one of America's famous puppeteers and is considered to be the father of American puppetry (Baird, 1965).

The Puppeteers of America was formed in 1937 by a group of puppetry artists who started puppet companies and travelled extensively. Also, television has made a tremendous impact on entertainment. Puppeteers were appearing in motion pictures and on television and so were given wide exposure. Some of the more recent well-known puppets are Edgar Bergen's *Charlie McCarthy* and *Mortimer Snurd*, Burr Tillstrom's *Kukla-politans*, the Italian mouse *Topo Gigio*, Shari Lewis's *Lamb Chop* and *Hush Puppy* and Jim Henson's *Muppets*.

Over the last 20 years or so, the concept of puppets in North America most often brings to mind *Sesame Street's Oscar, Ernie, Bert,* and the *Cookie Monster*.

Illustrious as these characters are, however, their family tree boasts an equally prestigious lineage: Lamb Chop, Howdy Doody, Kukla and Ollie, Sooty, Punch and Judy, the list goes back centuries. Almost always, puppets have been used as teachers: of religion, history, culture, behaviour. That they also entertain as they teach is all the more reason to adopt them in the classroom. (Fleming, Stutzbach & Carey, 1983, p. 97)

Puppetry is an ancient art, and is truly international. It has woven bright threads into the history of many nations.

As the children in this story create puppet plays of their own, they do so according to the capabilities and interest of each individual child, unaware that they are following a venerable tradition. "There is no need to justify its continuance by consciously and deliberately relating it to other subjects and by trying to find plays which are 'elevated' enough" (Wall, White, & Philpott, 1965, p. 226). The capabilities and interest of the child and the possibilities of the puppet are the only sound guides in the choice of a play, and the expression of the art is a paramount aim.

Puppetry Defined

Puppetry is a performing art. The puppeteer is the artist, and the puppet the instrument through which he creates living theatre. The *performing* element of puppetry cannot be emphasized enough. As performance, puppetry is a two-way communication that involves an active sender and a receiver—the puppeteer and the audience (Figure 1).

The *craft* aspect of puppetry, while essential, is only one element. Beautiful looking puppets are not enough to create a successful play production. It takes skill and practice to manipulate them and bring them to life. And although they must be crafted as works of visual art, their true reason for being is to perform.

Although most of us have had some experience with puppets, whether it is from seeing them on television or from having made them ourselves as children, it is important to consider the question: What really is a puppet?

A puppet is a non-person. It is a simplification of whatever it represents. It is a representation of an *idea* by an inanimate object. It is often a universal symbol, and a simplification of profound thoughts or feelings.

A puppet can be made from hundreds of different materials and can be manipulated with rods, strings or by the hands of the puppeteer. There are five principal types of puppet: hand, rod, string, shadow and body. From these five basic styles, come other varieties—hand-and-rod, object, finger and foot puppets.

While puppets often resemble dolls, they should never be confused with them. The child will talk to the doll, but will talk through the puppet. A doll is usually an inanimate object whilst the puppet is often designed to make as much movement as possible.

The puppeteer's role is to bring the inanimate object to life. As has been pointed out by Engler and Fijan (1980) in their book, *Making Puppets Come Alive*:



FIGURE 1

The puppeteer should use a puppet to create the illusion of life rather than an imitation of life. Each puppet has certain movements that it can do that, while related to certain human movements, are actually exclusive movements to that particular style of puppet. (p. 15)

It is up to the students as puppeteers to explore, experiment and discover what their puppets can and cannot do. For example, as the students embark on working with a glove puppet, they create the illusion of life by using movements exclusive to the glove puppet design. In keeping with this idea, Baird explains:

A puppet is an inanimate figure that is made to move by human effort before an audience. It is the sum of these qualities that uniquely defines the puppet. It is part of man's ancient urge to recreate life that results in this many-layered art. More diverse than painting, sculpture, dance, song, or story, puppetry has something of all of them. It is also a means of communication, an extension of human expression (Baird, 1974, p. 55).

The puppet does not have to resemble human beings to create life. An old sleeve from a sweater, operated in a certain way by a skilful puppeteer, can be just as alive and real to an audience as any human actor.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In the words of Anatole France (cited in Carlson, 1970):

I believe in the immortal world of marionettes and puppets. Doubtless there is nothing human in the way of flesh in these little beings of wood or cardboard; but there is something divine however, little it may be. They do not live like ourselves and yet they do live. They live as do the immortal gods. (p. 351)

Over the past decade children in my classes have been imagining and creating many types of puppets; improvising skits; inventing and writing stories, interviews and plays; and storytelling well-known myths and fables. These have been embellished with a complete theatre experience -- stages, spotlights, hand painted scenery, props, music and sound effects. When asked at the end of the year to choose their most enjoyable activity many children say, "Making puppets and putting on plays."

This brings me to the following questions:

1. What is educationally worthwhile about using puppets?
2. Specifically, in what ways do puppets encourage children to work imaginatively and creatively in an integrated arts experience?

Although I am trying to answer question two specifically, I am also on the lookout for the emergent qualities the situation creates, such as:

- If children are using their imaginations in the art aspects of puppetry, how does this inspire ideas in writing?
- Will this integrated arts experience free children from anxiety, inhibition and self-consciousness so that they are able to be more creative, imaginative, communicative and confident?

My goals for using puppetry in the classroom are as follows:

- 1) that using puppets will provide motivation within the class setting for many topics and subject areas within the curriculum;
- 2) that students will gain knowledge and understanding from creating and performing with puppets;
- 3) that the creative abilities of the students will be fostered both during construction and in using puppets;
- 4) that puppetry will be respected as an art form in its own right;
- 5) that students will learn to cooperate in the social interaction needed for construction and use of puppets;
- 6) that using puppets will make learning a positive and enjoyable experience;
- 7) that students will become less self-conscious and inhibited and more confident communicating with others;
- 8) that puppetry will provide *fun*;
- 9) that students will be challenged by their engagement in this expressive art form;
- 10) that students with learning problems will respond well to working with puppets in ways they would not necessarily do if working under standard classroom conditions;
- 11) that students will become flexible and look at things in new ways;
- 12) that I am free to teach in a way that is both imaginative and substantive.

Rationale

The appeal of fantasy is universal. Adults as well as children enjoy escaping the bonds of reality. For us as adults these flights of fantasy are mostly

short-lived and usually escapist. For young children flights of fantasy are a way of life which is, many would contend, as vital as breathing in stimulating their ability to think deeply and creatively.

Before we were preoccupied with passive forms of mass entertainment, children had the freedom to play in meadows or the green grottos of the forest. The organic forms of the giant trees and clinging mosses of this Pacific paradise were a realm of rich fantasy. Children went out and created their imaginative worlds from within their own beings in a thrilling natural setting.

All too often some of the suburban middle class values of gargantuan homes in tiny over-cleared lots, mind-rattling Nintendo games and TV action will overwhelm the power of play in a natural setting to stimulate children's spontaneous creative activity. Perhaps it is time for the school to become the new cultural oasis or creative bridge between what is and what can be for our children.

Puppetry is one of the most direct ways of bringing children back into the world of creating and imagining, of bring them back to a natural source of wonder and stimulating the kind of deep thinking they will need to cope with our complex world.

Imagination is rarely mentioned in reports of empirical enquiry into the teaching of art and other subjects because the existing conceptions of imagination are very varied and often vaguely defined. The terms and concepts connected with imagination are complex, many-faceted and interrelated in quite elusive ways. A focus on imagination is important because "differences among students, and diversity in classroom affairs often require inventive, novel, and sometimes original approaches to teaching, in order to bring about valuable forms of learning" (Richmond, 1990, p. 1).

Our children's minds and psyches need to be nourished together with the freedom to question and the opportunity to grow in a world where people understand that each child *is* different and has a *right* to be different.

Much of the education process tends to stamp out imagination, which many current thinkers believe is the profound source of answers to individual, community and global problems. "The present dominant model and principles derived from educational research and theorizing has almost entirely ignored the power and educational uses of children's imagination" (Egan, 1990, p. 54).

Curriculum experiences should include the nurturing of imagination and creativity. Albert Einstein considers "creativity to be far more consequential than knowledge in furthering the significant advances of mankind. For it is from rich and fertile imaginations -- much more than from accumulated information -- that such marvels [came into being] as the geodesic dome, the theory of relativity, the first airplane" (cited in Wassermann, 1987, p. 692). In other words, we need creative scientists as much as we need creative artists and writers.

Studies at Wayne University have indicated that imagination is a significant enhancer of later learning. "Young children who have been given opportunities to 'pretend' play show a marked superiority four years later in concept learning and in inhibiting impulsive behaviour" (Jenkins, 1980, p. 11).

The role of play in the process of growing is essential because it is "the means by which the child accomplishes his first great cultural and psychological achievements; through play he expresses himself" (Freud cited in Frazier & Renfro, 1987, p. 12). Through play the child learns; through play the child practises skills and expresses feelings for which there are no words; through play the child rehearses for life.

Imagination and play are two concepts which are linked, both formally and informally, by the active arts of puppetry and creative dramatics.

Puppetry is one of the most direct ways of bringing children back into the world of creation and imagination. Almost every stage of puppetry calls for the use of creative imagination. As the scenarios will show, the educational use of puppets allows for creativity, cooperation and motivation within the subject areas and is adaptable to the stages and abilities of the students involved.

By using puppets to enact various roles with their peers, students can also explore social interaction and reaction and by so doing, gain insight into successful application of those roles at home, with friends and in society around them.

It is my contention that puppets are a valuable tool that may be successfully used at all grade levels to benefit the intellectual, human, and social development of students within the classroom setting. Specifically, puppetry is a powerful and enjoyable way of developing children's imagining powers.

Characterization of Methods

This study draws educational implications from detailed pictures of classroom life using an integrated arts project with puppets. To clarify this process I designed the conceptual framework for the study (see Figure 2).

Eisner's (1985) model of art criticism is used because I contend that an artistic approach appropriately interprets this educational experience, as it looks at it from within the experience, a necessary place to be in evaluating artistic expression.

Eisner's (1985) model of educational criticism is divided into three major dimensions:

- descriptive
- interpretive
- evaluative.

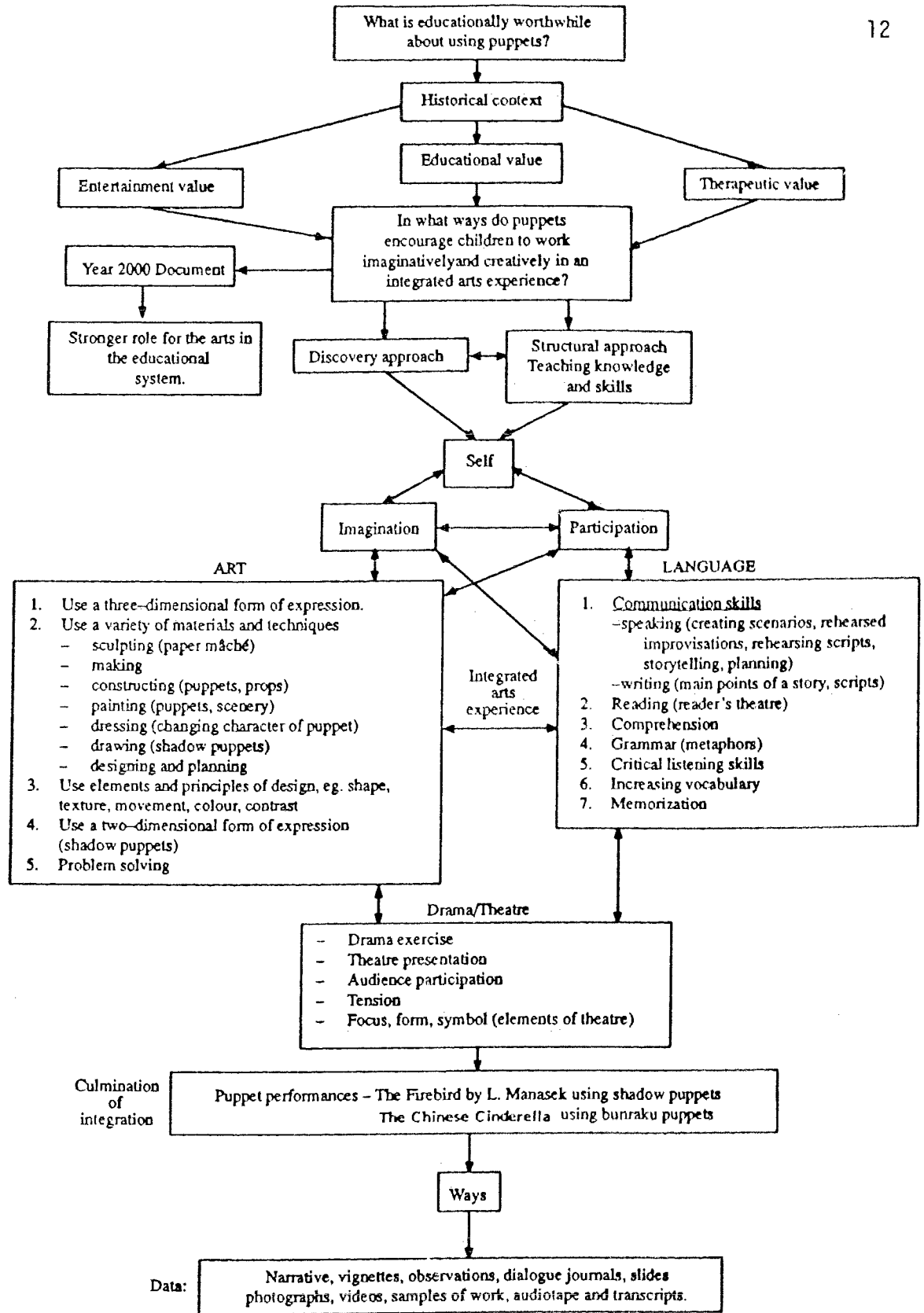


FIGURE 2
Conceptual Framework

Each of these elements is implicit in the four scenarios presented in Chapter Three.

Eisner's (1985) model is used to structure the narrative vignettes, record judgments, evaluate and interpret this educational experience.

This approach departs most obviously from familiar, systemic formats in scholarly journals. According to Eisner (1985), "the researcher preserves the concrete details of storytelling such as dramatic structure, interpretive ordering of events, narrative voice, and colourful metaphoric language" (p. 178). An "artistic rendering" (Eisner, 1985) may more closely capture the qualitative richness of this integrated arts project.

Also, I agree with Eisner that a personal, truthful account of an arts study is more enlightening and persuasive to those reading it, as the researcher seeks "illumination" and "penetration" (Eisner, 1985, p. 179).

My device for maintaining a balance between objectivity and the personal subjective nature of the experience in the descriptions of four classroom scenarios has been to assume a role that of teacher/Wizard. Thus I look through the window (as teacher) at the experience as well as peering back (as Wizard) out of its centre. Eisner's (1985) quotation from Annie Dillard's Pilgrim at Tinker Creek describes how a writer can objectively describe special qualities of a complex scene while being fully a part of that scene. By using the role of the Wizard, I have deliberately tried to free my study of pedagogical description; to write about the events, not just as a chronicle of activities, but also as an honest artist's critique from within the events.

The four scenarios in this study are organized as follows:

Scenario 1: Releasing the latch on children's imaginations: Puppet Wizardry

Scenario 2: Making puppets and children come alive.

Scenario 3: Puppetry - A Means of Creativity in Art and the Language Arts

Scenario 4: Preparing an End-of-Term Production.

Each scenario consists of several sessions of lessons, each of which have different objectives. As the sessions unfold, activities and events are described with words, photographs and children's comments, to help capture aspects of what is happening here. The children's actual and reflective statements through the study help interpret the educational experience and allow us to assess the success of the experience from their point of view.

In the analyses following each scenario I make judgements and interpretations of the events described in each scenario.

My interest in imagination is in its more creative *applications* and as a "new" way of looking and thinking in our contemporary educational culture. In studying the ways puppets encourage children to think imaginatively and creatively, and the ways puppets foster language development, I will observe and evaluate the process and achievements. The following questions have further guided my study:

- In what ways has acquiring a degree of "puppeteering expertise" encouraged the students to work imaginatively in art, speaking and writing?
- Is the concept of imagination more significant as a *process* or a *product* of achievement?
- What is it about the *process* and *product* that makes them imaginative?
- Are the students able to produce inventive and effective ideas consistently and do their ideas have vitality?
- How do the children behave as they work on imaginative puppetry activities?
- Are the students solving problems and thinking of new ways of looking and thinking as they are engaged in art, writing and performing activities?

- What observations can be made about the students' reactions to the demands and rewards of working with a particular art form as they gain expertise and knowledge of puppetry as an art form in its own right?
- What observations of change can be made as the students progress on a continuum from inhibition and self-consciousness to creativity, imagination, communication, sense of fun, self-confidence and self-discipline?

The descriptions and analyses with each scenario are intended to provide a rationale for using an integrated arts experience like puppetry in classrooms as a way of stimulating children to work imaginatively and to make such work memorable. The overall evaluation and conclusion of the study provides recommendations for further field work and suggestions for improvements on the original approach so that there are clear and continuing benefits.

Limitations

This type of action research with a theoretical framework has certain limitations which I shall describe.

A teacher wears many hats. In the puppet-creating lessons it was particularly difficult to collect written data because of individual children's demands and the variety of materials being used. Photographs were effective in capturing certain moments. I also used the children's reflective comments in their dialogue journals because their comments were honest and sincere, rather than written to please the teacher.

Although I have described different scenarios, the lessons involved in each scenario took a variety of forms.

As there are more boys than girls and the boys are often more orally aggressive, I tended to take more photographs of them. When I became conscious of this problem, I had to find ways of encouraging the girls' confidence.

In this study there were four special needs students two of whom required help from the school counsellor. Conclusions about how this educational experience helped these students therapeutically are not derived from this study.

Although samples of creative writing were analyzed, I cannot account for the sources of certain examples of language. For example, during the course of a study on the Middle Ages, my students learned a variety of vocabulary that would have been used by kings, knights and serfs. However, I cannot account for where students' other phrases and descriptions originated.

Terms

Scenario: depicts a collection of scenes (a set of planned activities) in the classroom. Each scenario is composed of several scenes put together by the scenarist -- myself -- who is then able to describe, record judgments, and evaluate each scene according to the prescribed plan.

Theatre Etiquette: sets the ground rules. I use the expression to help the children to understand how to behave and react as an audience, so that the interaction between actors and audience is appropriate. For example, puppets can invite comments and responses from the audience. However, as the puppeteers are children and not adults, the audience as children learn to be sensitive. They learn to laugh at the antics of the puppets. They learn to laugh with the puppets and performers and not *at* the child.

They learn to sit, listen, and observe, both sensually and analytically.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Imagination

In the words of Shakespeare:

Imagination -- the power that lifts us from the present tense to the world of possibility -- it is a gift beyond almost all others because it allows us to transcend the world that *is* and leap into another world, that which *might be*.

This is the gift I have, simple, simple; a ... spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions, revolutions: These are begot in the ventricle of memory, nourished in the womb of pia mater.... The gift is good in those in whom it is acute and I am thankful for it.

Love's Labour's Lost, Act IV, Scene 2, Line 67
(Frazier & Renfro, 1987, p. 1)

Before launching into this study, I found it necessary to understand the concept of *imagination*, and grasp why its potential must be developed in the child. In *Collins' Dictionary of the English Language* (1972), imagination is defined as "the mental faculty which apprehends and forms ideas of external objects; the poetical faculty; inventive powers controlled by a dominant plan or purpose" (p. 498). In the *Oxford English and Dictionary*, the imagination is defined thus:

the act of imagining, the act of forming mental images and concepts of what is not actually present to the senses. It is also the power to reproduce images stored in the memory or to recombine experiences in an entirely new way. (p. 420)

Frazier and Renfro (1987) note that the power to reproduce images from memory is termed in psychology, *reproductive imagination*. They also note that imagination involves recombining previous images to aid in the solution of a specific problem, and this is termed *creative imagination* (p. 3). It is this latter definition which applies most to this study.

In the descriptions that follow of the children embarking on an integrated arts experience using puppets, I include some discussion of imagination and how it relates to puppetry as a fine art. Sparshott (1990) says that "the fine arts, in one way or another, are arts of the imagination combining creativity, vitality, unity and otherness" (p. 2).

Imagination is the ability to see things in a different way, and to envisage alternative worlds. To use one's imagination is to see a world that is different and fascinatingly reachable -- in theory, if not in practice. To be imaginative is to have the ability to contemplate what we see in a diverse way. However, Sparshott (1990) insists that the "idea" of imagination includes a cohesiveness as well as diversity. Sparshott points out that imagination is a concept that consists of several themes and distinctions, some of which are general and some quite specific. There is a relationship between these themes and distinctions, but they are hard to establish. For example, there is a coherence of a puppet's form that fits its role. The children are involved in an imaginative exercise where they create a well-knit form that is suited to its function.

Frazier and Renfro (1987) in their book, *Imagination*, describe imagination as a gift that can be encouraged to produce new ideas and new ways of looking at things. They call it a "magnificent process of creation, a process in which the children travel on their own singular beam of light" (p. 1).

It is not only imaginative puppet exercises and creative dramatics activities that are the focus of this study, but also developing a new way of thinking, of examining and solving problems from different perspectives, in order to achieve new solutions; not only looking at problems with safe, tried and true solutions, but looking for untried, unusual answers as well. If Einstein in his childhood was able to imagine himself riding on a beam of light, which eventually led to his development of the Theory of

Relativity, then this generation of young people can also develop new ways of thinking to address effectively complex issues of nuclear disarmament, war, hunger, environmental pollution, homelessness, and so on. New ways of looking at age-old world problems are sorely needed to bring about speedier solutions in our children's future.

Einstein's images flowed from a great mind that was free to imagine. In answer to the question, "What is thinking?" Einstein replied: "All our thinking is of (the) nature of ... free play with concepts." (cited in Frazier and Renfro, 1987, p. 1.). "Free play with concepts" and free expression in an uncritical atmosphere are vital to nurturing imagination.

Barrow and Woods (1988) suggest that imagination is the capacity to be inventive, original or able to produce ideas. Imagination has tended to be linked to the arts, rather than the sciences, and has been described as somewhat different from *creativity*. Current thinking in physics, as much as painting, now sees creativity as being firmly linked to imagination.

To be a creative person, it is not enough to produce your own work; you must also produce something original. Barrow and Woods (1988) suggest that "to encourage creativity, we need to promote ingenuity and imagination so that individuals are capable of making the imaginative leaps necessary for breaking new ground in any sphere" (p. 109).

Barrow argues that imagination is not a faculty that one possesses. A person does not have imagination. However, one could describe an individual as imaginative if he is capable of conceiving unusual and effective ideas, or writing poetry, designing a house or a puppet, but if one is to be imaginative in the areas in question, one needs a certain expertise and knowledge of that area. In keeping with this idea, Barrow

(1990) says, "One requires disciplined understanding in a given sphere to be imaginative in it" (p. 146).

Once children have achieved mastery in a particular field of study, their experience is renewed. As they continue to learn more about this special area of study, they explore different ways of looking at its various aspects. They remember what has been learned previously and apply that to creating new experiences in the area in question. As the students become experts, they become more imaginative. As the children are given more and more information and learn new skills about puppetry, they are prepared to become more imaginative in processing what they know.

When we talk of people "having imagination" and imply that they possess some innate ability, what we actually mean is that they do activities in an unusual and effective way. Barrow's particular definition is in terms of product or achievement and not in terms of experience or process. He contends that to be called imaginative, a person must characteristically perform and produce effective and unusual work. It is not enough to produce fanciful ideas. If imagination is to mean something worthwhile and not be a vague term indiscriminately used, "it must meet the criteria of consciousness, inclination, unusualness and effectiveness" (Barrow, 1990, p. 109).

Egan (1992) suggests that we see imagination as a special form of flexibility, vitality, and vividness "that come from the ability to think of the possible and not just the actual" (p. 65). He also suggests that "Imagination is the capacity to think of things as possibly being so; it is an intentional act of mind; it is the source of invention, novelty ... it is a capacity that greatly enriches rational thinking." (p. 43).

In some of the puppet-making activities, especially those where the children have less freedom over choice of materials, they will have to think harder about "the possibilities." For example, while embarking on a puppet workshop, a class of grade seven children were limited to creating puppets from a cupboard full of tennis balls. By

adding a few additional materials of their own invention they were able to think of incredible possibilities. Their ideas were unique and had great vitality. Sometimes providing children with limited materials will tap inner sources of their inventiveness. They are forced to think harder about the possibilities and their imaginations kick in to help them do this.

Eisner (1985) assumes that meaning, understanding and education can be achieved solely by sensory experience. Best (1985) believes this to be a misconception which is seriously misleading for the arts, language and education generally. Best gives an example written by Simone Weil, who describes two women who receive letters during the war about the deaths of their sons. One can read and the other cannot. The woman who can read collapses with shock, while the other woman looking at an identical letter remains unconcerned. They have shared the same sensory experience but the differences of emotional response can be attributed to the former's understanding.

Eisner seems to say that sensory experience is sufficient to provide us with concepts but Best (1985) disagrees and says that concepts are linguistic. "They are part of a public language, and are acquired in learning how to use it correctly" (pp. 178-179).

An important educational consequence is that if we wish to help students to extend their conceptual horizons it is not sufficient simply to offer them extended sensory experience. It is necessary also to help them achieve a deeper understanding of the media which gives sense to experience.

Wallace Stevens (cited in Greene, 1970) writes: "The imagination is the power that enables us to perceive the normal in the abnormal" (p. 303). For example, while walking along a beach, I have observed some children will pick out a large interesting shaped log and explain that it looks like a dragon head, a snake poised to pounce, a

whale, and so on. They see imaginary creatures in the gnarled, unusual shapes of the driftwood. Stevens (1970) says that "imagination must effect some vital connection between the self and 'things' if people are to live their lives in wholeness, in vitality" (cited in Greene, 1990, p. 304). John Dewey implied that imagination is something other than the commonplace, customary and monotonous. He described imagination as a way of seeing and feeling things, where "the mind meets the world" (cited in Greene, 1970, p. 314).

In summary, to be imaginative means to be inventive; it means a person is capable of producing unusual ideas that are put to effective use. Yet, if a child is to be productively imaginative, he or she needs to gain skills and knowledge in a subject area. For the term imagination to have meaning and substance, it must meet the criteria of unusualness and effectiveness.

I have explained the aspects of the imagination that are important for the purposes of this study. However, as puppetry is an all-encompassing art form, where students play with materials, words and ideas to allow their minds to create new realities, I will now discuss imagination in relation to literature written with a philosophical imagination, because this, to, has a bearing on my study.

"The genius of the philosophical imagination in children's literature is that it avoids condescension to children, whether children in the stories or children in the audience, by raising provocative questions that engage and tax the acumen of adults as much as children" (Egan & Nadaner, 1988, p. 191).

Philosophical imagination can give richness and meaning to literature written for children, for example, Arnold Lobel's *Frog and Toad* stories. Glove puppets can be used effectively to tell these stories and can help to bring alive the innocence of Toad and the sophistication of Frog. In the story of *The Garden*, it is Toad's naivete that provokes reflection on the nature of causality. We laugh at Toad but doing that is

not a way of laughing at children. We are stopped from being completely condescending even to Toad, since we are all hard pressed to explain exactly what is required for true causality.

Tuck Everlasting is another powerful story that explores ethics and the meaning of life. It asks us to reconsider our attitude towards death. By reading the story to various points one is able to discuss many philosophical issues, for example, the implications of immortality are varied and profound, life is cyclical, the problems of sharing a secret, how certain decisions affect our lives, how life is constantly moving and changing and the value of life itself. "One way, though certainly not the only way, for a writer in full respect for children is to write with philosophical imagination. Addressing the ageless questions of philosophy is itself a renunciation of condescension: it is also a celebration of the humanity we share with our children" (Matthews, cited in Egan & Nadaner, 1988).

Finally stories written with a philosophical imagination can be used effectively to develop role dramas and puppet plays that raise provocative questions and engage children in meaningful issues that cause a change of understanding.

The Art of Puppetry

Puppetry is an art form of unlimited scope. A good artist never stops learning or experimenting. It is only through constant development and change that puppet theatre can remain a vital art form.

Binyon (1966) describes puppetry as a "form of dramatic art, that is a form of communication between performers and an audience ... puppetry is a visual art, and communicates by visual means. Words spoken for the puppets, can reinforce and clarify the visual impact" (p. 8). Binyon also suggests that because movement

is the essence of the art form, we have as much to learn from the art of the clown, the juggler, the acrobat, the conjuror and the actor.

One of the problems with most of the reported sources on puppetry is that they describe "how to" make and use puppets. Few literary resources delve into the philosophical significance of puppetry as an art form.

I will try to explain some reasons for this. George Bernard Shaw (1965) described the puppet as "the actor in its primitive form" (p. 42), but the word "primitive" may frequently be misunderstood as "simplistic" and therefore not worthy of serious consideration. "But with puppetry, we discover not simplicity, but primeval force, not the periphery of an art form, but its core" (Malkin, 1980, p. 12).

The puppeteer, unlike that of a masked performer, is completely free as any performer can be. The puppeteer is concealed and so the possibilities, as he transforms from person to performer, are limitless.

Malkin (1980) believes that "the ritual, educational, psychological and aesthetic properties of the puppet are even more powerful than those of the mask" (p. 10). Malkin suggests that the art and power of the puppet is less appreciated than that of masks because it is rarely presented at its most intense level.

Another common misconception is that puppets are useful only with young children. While puppets are often used with preschool and kindergarten children (Hyde, 1964; Macdonald, 1970; Quisenberry & Willis, 1975), several other reports have shown that puppets are used effectively with elementary school age children (Johnson, 1966; Liss, 1950; Morrison, 1976; Reich, 1968; Sheppard, 1955), and equally effectively with high school students (Dillavou and associates, 1954; MacGuigan, 1966, cited in Leyser & Wood, 1980, p. 392).

There are educationalists who dismiss puppetry and show little appreciation of it as an art of unquestioned value. For example, elementary and secondary

school teachers tell me at puppetry workshops that they tend to use puppets at the *end* of the school year for something attractive to engage students' interest. Also, at the university level in Canada puppetry is not included as a separate course or as part of a drama course in the Fine Arts curriculum. However, in the United States, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland, puppetry is offered as a course for students training to be teachers. As Renfro and Schwalb (1986) state, "The enhancement of learning new concepts and the retention of old concepts through the use of puppetry is both well-accepted and well-documented" (p. 29).

In this century puppet theatre has taken a back seat as a performing art. By examining a certain characteristic of puppet theatre we may find an explanation. Even in cases where puppets themselves are extraordinary, according to Uno Koshiro (1990), "If the content of the puppet presentation does not fall within the bounds of ordinary shared concepts, then the performance will not communicate to its audience" (p. 20). For example, let us imagine a person who wants to make a puppet that looks just like a human being, and wants to use it to do puppet theatre. This task requires much artistic thought, but if the puppet moves like a human being, the audience will not be interested artistically. They may be impressed by the special manipulation techniques. However, if the puppet makes huge flying leaps, falls crashing to the floor, or has its head chopped off, then we have puppet theatre. These are ordinary shared concepts even if they are exaggerated.

Direct communication is the feature that makes puppetry so accessible to children of all ages. Puppets are extraordinary and yet they do ordinary things. In keeping with this idea Uno Koshiro (1990) says, "Interest is created when something ordinary is artistically manipulated, and changed into something extraordinary" (p. 19).

Although this characteristic of puppet theatre makes it easy for children to understand, it may also be a reason why puppet theatre in this century has been unable to play a leadership role in the performing arts. Generally today people lean towards art forms that are obviously symbolic.

Puppetry is magic and deep down most of us know it. But we are embarrassed. It is the twentieth century. We are adults We are civilized. We are sophisticated. We cannot admit to believing in silly things, in "childish things" -- so, we pretend that we do not believe in such things. But as Malkin (1980) points out:

Children do not have to pretend. Watch them at play, mesmerized by the motion of their figures. They do not have to be told that their puppets are alive, that puppetry is magical. Magic cannot be explained. Its purpose is to mystify. (p. 9)

Puppets have been carefully made by loving hands throughout history. Students do not become involved in this art form simply to be stimulated and to express themselves. They find a deeper level of appreciation having tried themselves to create a being that is an extension of themselves, to create art. I use puppetry as craft design, theatre, art, technology, skill, history, language, satisfying work, fun and therapy. Engler and Fijan (1980) state in their book *Making Puppets Come Alive*:

Puppetry is an all-encompassing art form that requires the total talent that one has to offer. In no other art form does one find this kind of blending of such arts as directing, acting, writing, designing, sculpture and choreography. (p. 11)

Engler and Fijan (1980) point out that "Puppetry holds a unique place in the performing arts" (p. 11) because it is the only art form where the performer totally creates his/her own instrument. The puppeteer is an artist, who designs and builds his/her own characters, which are works of art. Violinists do not manufacture their own violins, nor do ballet dancers make their own slippers.

George Latshaw (1990) suggests that in order to win a place in the world of the arts, more attention must be spent on the puppet being challenged to become emotionally involved to captivate the adult audience. Latshaw poses the question -- "Puppets can entertain. Puppets can educate. But can puppets exalt?" (p. 9). Latshaw (1990) explains that if puppets can be elevated in rank, honor, power, character, quality and stimulate, as the imagination, then puppetry will achieve a high recognition. "One theatre noted for achieving this pinnacle of perfection is the bunraku" (p. 9). In scenario four of this study the students design and perform with bunraku puppets.

The art of puppetry is enjoyable. Puppets are colourful, exciting and challenging. There are so many different types of puppets, which all move differently on a variety of stages. Puppetry means variety for children when designing, performing and appreciating. "Children learn about transformation through puppets. They can select one thing, combine it with another, and get a splendid result. Children transform color, shape, and sound into many worlds in their imagination" (Currant, 1985, p. 55). For many children it is new and different to create three-dimensional art forms. Puppets can be made in all sizes and shapes. They learn a different and specialized craft, akin to sculpture, yet different.

The art in puppetry is the key to imagination because the art itself is an imaginative exercise from creating costumes to performing dialogue. The children are involved in an imaginative task where they create a well-knit form suited perfectly to its function.

Like other art forms, puppetry allows "unlimited scope for experimentation and development" (Engler & Fijan, 1980, p. 12). No one becomes an accomplished dancer, painter or puppeteer after only reading one book or attending introductory classes. Artistic ability is developed only by constant

practicing. Mastering basic techniques is only the beginning of becoming an accomplished puppeteer.

Yoshida Bungoro's (1990) artistic memoirs contain several examples of Bunraku artists and their long apprenticeships. He describes how in Japan, a bunraku puppeteer enters as an apprentice at the age of ten and spends ten to fifteen years learning to operate the puppet's feet properly. After that he spends five to ten years operating the left hand. At the same time, he learns to be invisible: wearing the Kuroko's black costume and hood (Figures 63 and 64). When he finishes his work and leaves the theatre, no one recognizes his artistry because the bunraku puppeteer spends his whole life in shadow. This is how artists often dedicate themselves to their work. An art form requires a disciplined internalized commitment. Bungoro (1990) states "the path of the artist is very difficult, but once you find the entrance, you can enter in just one step ... For sixty years I have never deviated from the way of the puppet" (p. 62).

My students are participating in an art form where they are making, performing and critiquing (as audience members). As has been pointed out by Sirppa Sivori-Asp (1990), the "puppeteer-puppet-audience must move in harmony during the magic happening that is the play" (p. 3). Performing is a difficult act that requires much discipline.

Puppetry is a theatre art form, which encompasses developmental drama and theatre crafts (properties, staging, light, sound, costume and sets). For example when introduced to puppetry, students improvise and experiment with the puppets. This experimental improvisational drama is developed into plays, complete with theatrical effects, thus fostering aesthetic appreciation of puppetry as a theatre art form.

In the conceptual framework (Figure 2) I have written the essential components of theatre that is, focus, tension, surprise, contrast of movement, time and space. Gavin Bolton said in a keynote speech at the 1991 Drama Conference, that pre-school children already have a knowledge of the play of theatre, that is, they already know the basic elements of theatre. For example, Helen is a four year old, who is not allowed to have a Mars bar. She says to her grandfather, "You're a naughty boy, you want that Mars bar and you can't have it." The grandfather reaches out to grab the imaginary bar of chocolate. This scenario develops where Helen appears to leave the room, turns her back sharply and as she sees again the outstretched hand of her grandfather's, she dashes across the room with appropriate language. This scene has focus, tension, surprise, contrast of movement, time and space. Helen enjoys the aesthetic experience of the grandfather's act of reaching out and grabbing the chocolate bar. She enjoys the deception and the delight in catching the culprit.

As teachers, we need to access the children's knowledge of the play of theatre. Puppetry is an exciting way for children to use this natural resource of knowledge and develop it. They can embellish their theatrical productions by using theatre crafts, such as coloured spotlights and scenery. Shadow puppets, in particular, lend themselves to dramatic presentations because of the contrast between the black silhouettes and the bright colours that sharply stand out on the translucent screen. Children can also easily change the lighting on the screen to suit a particular scene they are presenting. A shadow puppeteer can create a surrealistic effect with shadow puppets and can also animate them effectively.

In summary, puppetry as an art form should take a pre-eminent place in our culture and our educational institutions for the following reasons.

- It is an all-encompassing art and craft form.

- It is the only art in which the artists create their own instrument, then speak through that instrument directly to the audience.
- It is colourful, exciting and challenging.
- It has unlimited scope for experimentation and development in mental, physical and spiritual ways.
- It has no wrong answers. Every child is as important as the next.
- It is an exciting way for children to use their knowledge of the play of theatre and experience puppetry as a theatre art form.
- It requires imagination at almost every stage. The imaginative effort and development brings the reward and a feeling of accomplishment.

"If teachers in schools have much they could offer the art of puppetry, that art has also much to offer them as teachers" (Binyon, 1966, p. 9).

Language Development

The educational value of using puppets in the curriculum is extensive. Puppets are helpful in teaching subject matter and giving information. As Weiger (1974) points out, "Puppets may dramatize a reading or library book, events of history, customs of a country, a piece of music, a current problem, social amenities, community life, a holiday, care for pets, need for ecology and nearly any situation that may exist" (p. 58).

The present thrust of puppet utilization and their value as an educational tool should not be viewed with indifference. The educational use of puppets in an integrated curriculum is seen primarily in the social studies and language arts fields. Puppetry is used with children to release their creativity in the areas of art, storytelling, language and music. Puppetry encourages development of

communication skills. Improvising or inventing, whether through classroom drama or puppetry, is critical to all oral language development.

The most obvious way that puppetry enlarges a child's vocabulary is by providing a situation for using, with more confidence, words the child already knows. For example, once the student is actually faced with the wicked, ugly troll the phrase, "You are mean and you are bad; I hate you, you wicked ugly troll!" may be assertively said. The act of saying it through the character of the puppet makes the phrase the student's.

Several significant research studies (Bumpass, 1965; Weiger, 1974) have shown that groups of children who have had regular creative dramatics experiences in the classroom have made greater gains in language arts, including the mastery of a larger vocabulary and reading skill, than control groups who have not had drama (Blank, 1953, p. 76). Not only does drama introduce new words, and more words from the child's passive to active vocabulary, it also sharpens the edges of the words already used. For example, if a puppet knocks on a door and says weakly, "Let me in," and there is no response, the student may be finally moved to say, "Open this door in the name of the king!". In the process of sharpening vocabulary, the puppeteer also adapts what is said to fit the situation and needs of the audience. In other words, the student puppeteer develops the art of rhetoric.

Educational drama performs a valuable service in helping a child overcome his/her "immature egocentricity" (Piaget, 1926, p. 90). This is the term Jean Piaget used in his classic study of the language development of children in which he identified two distinct stages:

Egocentric language that is uttered by a child to no particular person and for no particular purpose; and adapted communication that is

socialized. A child adapts his communication to influence another person; in order to be successful he must take into account the point of view of the other. (Piaget, 1978, p. 90)

As long as a child's language is egocentric, it is considered inadequate because the child cannot create meaning for the listener. The child tends to assume that the listener can read his or her mind. Parents can often understand but only because the child has chattered along with some kind of action.

Effective communication calls for decentering, rising above one's egocentricity and putting oneself into the role of the listener. Several significant research studies have shown that creative dramatics and puppetry increases a child's capacity to put himself into the role of another person and thereby adapt his communication with that other person. (Lunz, 1974, p. 91)

Puppetry builds self-confidence in speakers. It also develops fluency. The children discover that they can try out different voices and rhetorical statements. They have the opportunity to develop a wider range of dialects. No matter what the dialect, however, a child engaged in puppetry will be pressured to speak clearly. Speech is stimulated by the emotion and sense of power coming from the imagined situation that the puppets are rooted in.

Reich (1968) has conducted research on a language program with linguistically underdeveloped children. She explains that their poor speech problems carry over into their reading, writing and spelling, so that all the language subjects "bore the grammatical and articulatory errors that were present in their oral speaking. "They were limited in the extent of their vocabulary and constantly reused a limited core of words with little embellishment" (p. 621).

Reich's (1968) research suggests that puppetry may be a language tool that could be used by all teachers to face the problem of "teaching the formal three R curriculum to linguistically underdeveloped children" (Reich, 1968, p. 621).

Renfro (1985) suggests: "The storyteller turns words into memorable tales. The puppeteer makes inanimate objects appear to be alive. Combined, the verbal and the visual components enhance involvement and enjoyment" (p. 41).

Once the puppet has been created it needs to be brought to life with a special voice. It is at this point that the children step over into storytelling.

Teachers must allow time for improvisation. Renfro (1979) stresses the need for improvisation as opposed to a word-for-word script for the following reasons:

1. It frees the performer.
2. It allows children to think and act "with the puppet".
3. It gives performers an open-ended freedom and prevents boredom.
4. It means less time is needed to create an improvisational outline compared to a formal script. (p. 43) (See Figure 3.)

As has been pointed out by Kent (1979): "So the children must first improvise and feel comfortable with the play they've created. The children find that it is very natural to go from talking their ideas to writing them down" (p. 11). Of course, such "stories" don't have to have plots and sequential events. A child may create a paper rocket, and give it eyes and a mouth. Without benefit of a puppet stage, he launches his rocket saying, "Moon, here I come!". Scott, May and Shaw (1972) indicate that, "One of the advantages of puppet actors over real actors is that there may seem to be limitations to what a human actor can be made to represent." (p. 6). He no longer sees himself as a plane, or a bird, for example, but if he wants to suggest a plane or bird for a puppet show, he can create one.

A story can be told in commonplace fashion or with creative fire and imagination. For example, a child might say, for the goblin puppet she has made, "I'm hiding behind this tree so I can scare the next person who comes along."



FIGURE 3

However, the creative child might say to her puppet's audience, "Sh! don't make a noise. Now watch carefully. When this timid little boy comes along, I'm going to pop out from behind this tree and make him jump so high they'll have to send a rocket to rescue him."

Renfro (1979) stresses that: "Most of us are observers of other people's stories We do not think of ourselves as creators of stories. Our mysterious inner worlds remain guarded secrets, lost to the world and to ourselves" (p. 9). Given freedom, children are wonderful creators of stories. However, their natural, intuitive gifts in almost all the arts are often structured too much in schools by teachers and as they grow older the very essence of creativity disappears.

Having a story to tell may promote the creation of puppet characters to tell it; the puppets do not necessarily come first. There are two general ways to approach the preparation of a puppet play. According to Weiger (1974) preparation of a puppet play can be done by:

1. Selecting or creating a story and then making puppets to dramatize it.
2. Creating a puppet, getting acquainted with it, and then finding or developing a story to suit its nature.

In this study, both ways will be used.

Elizabeth Williams (1967) has done studies on using puppets in improvised plays and analyzing speech and language as the students are influenced to feel and talk like someone else. She says that the speech indirectly may improve, but the effect is not expected to be immediate or obvious. However, she adds that new speech patterns will convince children emotionally that they can have more than one style of talking. This new language they are acquiring helps the child as a personality.

Williams explains that the teacher can further structure conversation to encourage correct forms of speech that have not appeared in the initial play. she suggests that in grades 1, 2 and 3 a teacher can ask, "What did you hear?". The answer should be "I heard ...". Then the question, "What did the girl say she saw ...?" The reply probably is "She said she saw Joe ...". According to Williams this style of conversation gives the child practice with many uses of correct forms of did, saw, go, etc. and suggests that these uses encourage a change in thought processes and habit. "Blank filling can later, much later do the testing. But use is learning." (Williams, 1969)

"Puppets are not limited to teaching the concrete, but are excellent for teaching intangible concepts." (Rivers, 1979, p. 956). For example, puppets could be used in a study of metaphors. One puppet with smooth, well-groomed blonde hair might argue with another puppet who has extremely messy hair sticking out all over. They use metaphors to describe each other's hair; and in doing so begin to fight. Metaphors such as "your hair is broom straw" and "your hair is spun gold" could show that metaphors are a form of "untruths," since they describe an object as being something that it literally is not. The concepts of antonyms, synonyms, prefixes, suffixes; personification and behavioral words expressing feelings may be illustrated in an identical way. "These [figurative] concepts are introduced indirectly and the students get experience in both inferential and comprehension skills" (Rivers, 1979, p. 957).

Since audience (student) involvement is vital to learning, it can be assured by a puppet's eye contact or gestures. Appropriate puppet manipulation and movement add to the entertainment value and create interest. Interaction with the audience increases involvement.

Puppetry stimulates thought in the development of a play. To avoid memorization of lines and yet put on the action of a story the group must decide on the main points and themes of the story. They must discuss plot and characterization, all of which are basic elements in good reading. As Batchelder and Comer (1956) say: "The puppets will not only encourage interest in reading, they will provide a motivation for improvement of comprehension." (p. 86).

McGuigan (1966) believes that puppetry has value for the adolescent as good motivation for reading drama, deciding on plays for performance, writing creative dramatics and learning the dramatic form of writing including: "antecedent action, initial incident, exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and denouement." (p. 453).

Puppetry is a powerful medium for motivating the most reluctant students into creating stories and writing dialogue. As the puppets take shape, the children will use them to converse with each other, inventing dialogue as they proceed. Some students will see a need to write down dialogue the moment it is spoken without giving it a chance to change. Kent (1979) says that when this occurs, it is better to let it happen but don't encourage the entire class to write when they first start inventing dialogue." (p. 11). The children must first improvise and feel comfortable with the play they've created. They can then write down the dialogue and scene cues so as to not forget them.

When a group of children are ready to write their dialogue, each member is given a piece of different coloured paper. The children then write their dialogue on coloured paper and cut apart the section spoken at one time. All the children paste their sections of dialogue in sequence on one piece of construction paper. As they read their play from on script, the different coloured paper offers visual clues to speak.

Puppetry is an excellent medium for improving discussion skills. "They [puppets] have been found to facilitate skills of listening, speaking and writing." (Bumpass, 1965; Weiger, 1974). For example, in order to put on a shadow puppet play, I require students to:

1. discuss choice of fable;
2. choose main characters;
3. decide on size of drawings to fit scenery and screen;
4. discuss addition of textural effects (feathers, coloured gels, grasses);
5. decide if puppets will manipulate better with horizontal or vertical rods;
6. discuss direction puppets need to move to hold a conversation;
7. discuss which puppets will have moving parts to make them animated;
8. decide on simple scenery, voices and sound effects;
9. discuss as a class the effectiveness of the story, manipulation and clarity of speech.

If a child needs to speak more clearly his/her peers will usually know it and their prodding "I couldn't understand what you said," is usually more effective than the teacher modelling how to pronounce certain words. Like dramatic inventing, task and topic talk are social activities and this focussed discussion accelerates language learning.

Puppetry develops critical listening skills and the ability to think quickly. Children involved in skits are challenged to listen attentively in order to respond appropriately. Children will listen longer and more attentively when puppets are teaching or performing.

"Puppetry encompasses all of the language arts -- experience, listening, a summing up of the use of the language arts tools in every facet of life's experiences. It is a curriculum in its production" (Weiger, 1974, p. 56).

Entertainment and Therapeutic Values

Children use puppets to release their creativity in the areas of art, storytelling, language and sound. However, I contend that puppetry leads to other educational values, stemming from its social, therapeutic and entertainment aspects.

This research is principally concerned with the ways puppets encourage children to work imaginatively and creatively in an integrated arts experience. However, this focus does not exclude special benefits gained by children who appear to have a low self-concept or appear shy, withdrawn or aggressive. The tactile and sensory side to the art of puppetry will reach such children, where more academic methods may have failed. In other words, art is therapy.

Any teacher who has introduced puppetry into the curriculum knows that children of all ages love puppets, love making them, love manipulating them and perhaps best of all love performing with them. Puppetry provides fun (Dillavou, 1954; Kkarasch, 1965). Students will become experts by being involved in the many enjoyable aspects of puppetry.

Nanda Carrant, in her article, "The Expansive Educational Value of Puppets" (1985), describes the connection between puppetry and the universal character of the "fool." Each country had a puppet in the form of a fool, clown, jester and buffoon. Mr. Punch is a very "adult" type of puppet. Children relate more easily to a puppet that has the innocence of a fool. "The fool retains the important role of wise

man and helps establish a feeling of joy in the child and adult" (Currant, 1985, p. 56).

Puppetry gives the children a skill that can be used almost everywhere to satisfy the need for recognition and for entertaining others. Often at school, camp, or parties children are asked to help entertain. Children welcome a positive way to receive recognition by contributing at family celebrations. We tend to think that children need entertaining by professionals all the time, which is essentially a passive form of fun. Children enjoy the active involvement of entertaining each other.

Over a number of years, I have observed an interesting social pattern in my classes. Some of the girls, and often racially or culturally different children, will need more time, encouragement, confidence, self-esteem and experience in working in groups in a non-critical atmosphere, before they will express themselves freely. Einstein (cited in Frazier & Renfro, 1987) uses the term "free play with concepts" (p. 1) to describe free expression in an unfettered atmosphere. This is vital to the concept of imagination.

For imaginative and original ideas to flourish, for students to develop new ways of thinking, we must find a balance between a freeing atmosphere and maintaining a certain structure which will set the tone for future work. In effect, this means relinquishing some of the adult authoritarian influence over the students and fostering trust between the students themselves. Even though Einstein as a child was ridiculed and excluded, he was able to retain his sense of self, through the free use of his imaginative powers.

Puppetry contributes in many ways toward sound self-esteem, which means feeling warm and loving toward oneself. Often children can accept positive words from a puppet that they cannot from an adult. Puppetry helps build a positive self-

image. "This refers to how we see ourselves and differs from the feeling or emotion of self-esteem" (Jenkins, 1980, p. 14).

In puppetry and drama, there are no wrong answers. There is an immediate feeling of accomplishment built into the work. Students who do not do well in academic subjects will often experience success through puppetry. A child will find some aspect that he is good at. This is often enough to change their self-image that success builds upon success.

Teachers are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that effective learning takes place only through meaningful experiences in which youngsters feel as they think. For example, those who play the different parts in a puppet sketch, acting out the different characters in the correct expression of feelings and tones of speech, become personally and emotionally involved in the dramatization. Compared to playing parts as actors, it is easier for children to get "carried away" in puppet plays where the puppeteers feel free to act and respond on behalf of the puppets. Also important is the discussion afterwards, as this is where the class expresses its feelings and thoughts rather than keeping it to themselves.

Puppetry offers the child an avenue of expression without fear of being rejected by others. This is partially the reason why puppets frequently hit each other. A puppet does not have to be a perfectionist and can act out what a child may be feeling. There is a feeling of security in this freedom. "Puppets possess a unique feature ... they can be stupid (and let the students teach them); they can be silly; and perhaps most important, they can be equals, not adult disciplinarians but understanding friends" (Fleming, Stutzbach & Carey, 1983, p. 97).

Puppets take off the shoulders of the child the pressure that comes from blaming after mistakes have been made. Children really can and do separate

themselves from their puppets' mistakes. It is the puppet who is clumsy and silly, but not the puppeteer.

Puppetry aids in the development of attitudes. Many teachers feel that positive attitudes can be more significant for a child's future than all the academic subjects combined. The positive experience of presenting a play to peers can help to develop a healthy attitude.

Finally, puppets motivate all children to speak clearly and, in particular, help children with speech difficulties. There are usually at least two children each year with speech problems in my classes. For most students, the problem is confidence in projecting their voices. As they learn to project their voices through the puppets, the children are hidden from view and are able to practise speaking clearly, without fear of ridicule. (In this children are not alone -- how often have we heard adults admit their reluctance to voice their opinions because of their fears when speaking in front of groups?)

For many children whose stuttering is caused by emotional problems, puppetry is a wonderful release because they can often, for the first time, achieve fluent speech as they talk through the puppets. Children with other speech problems will try especially hard to have their puppets understood. Renfro (1979) points out: "Since hand and eye coordination is often related to speech problems, puppet-making and manipulation, which improve general muscular coordination, can be especially helpful" (p. 76).

Puppetry can at one and the same time overcome the emotional difficulties that interfere with children's learning abilities, while opening up windows to their imaginations and releasing their innate creativity. All this leads the child to further success and joy in learning.

CHAPTER THREE

Practical Applications - Activities

Scenario 1: Releasing the Latch on Children's Imaginations: Puppet Wizardry

Objectives

In this scenario I am trying to achieve the following specific objectives:

- to release the latch on children's imaginations in an uncritical atmosphere where ideas are accepted.
- To introduce puppetry as an art form, for its own sake.
- To look at a variety of household objects and try to see them differently from what they appear.
- To create a puppet that is made to move in a certain way.
- To initiate groupwork where the students can discuss together aspects of the work.
- To use an approach that is open-ended enough to allow for personal shaping of the tasks and for individual interpretation.

(Session #1)

"The puppet is the actor in his primitive form. Its symbolic costumes from which all realistic and historically correct impertinences are banished, its unchanging stare, the mimicry by which it suggests human gestures in unearthly caricature, these give to the performance an intensity to which few actors can pretend" (George Bernard Shaw, cited in Wall, White & Philpott, 1965, p. 42).

The Scene is Set

The buzz of the bell signals the start of the third week at Ocean Cliff Elementary School. The central cast of characters consists of grade three and four students.

The stage is set in what we should call a creative sanctum. The Wizard is ready to let the children unleash their imaging powers to enjoy a year long flight into the imagination.

The Wizard sees the students' discomfort in the geometric uni-dimensions of the new school building. Prolonged rectangular corridors have drawn them into one of the many identi-kit boxes that make up the new school functional classroom. The building has a charmless architectural modernity that stultifies rather than stimulates the mind. Happily, amidst all the geometric precision, the light from big glass windows draws in the relief of outdoors greenery to eager childish eyes.

But this square room with its conventionally arranged rectangular tables contains more startling contrasts, vividly apparent as the children walk through the door. Like scattered stardust, out of the Wizard's box have tumbled an array of still, tiny bodies with hands and feet hanging limply and popping eyes. Fluorescent colours, lavish textures, suits of velvets and velours trimmed with brocade lace and fur are the finery of those fascinating creatures. Puppets -- string, shadow, hand, finger -- puppets of all shapes and sizes are the teaching tools in the Wizard's domain. Objects -- ice-crushers, cork poppers, egg beaters, soup ladles, colourful detergent bottles -- these are the everyday raw materials of puppet magic, which, with skill and imagination, are transformed into each child's personal "magic teacher."

With a wide arm sweep the Wizard speaks

"Play with the puppets."

"Observe how they are built."

"Talk with each other about how they move."

(Movement is the essence of the art, thinks the Wizard.) In Figure 4 Tyler said, "What kind of puppet is this?" In Figure 5 Krista said, "Mmm he is a different kind of puppet. I have not seen one like this before."

After thirty minutes of popping excitement the Wizard cries: "Freeze! Time for everyone to imagine these simple objects as something other than they've always seemed. Look again with new eyes. What character does this long handled detergent bottle suggest? Boxes, paper bags, cardboard tubes, wooden spoons, almost anything one can think of -- can be seen as a 'body'."

The Wizard starts to stick buttons, beads, feathers, pipe cleaners, fabric and other what-nots to a plastic bottle. A whole world of strange creatures parades before eyes wide with the prospect of magical journeys to lands of many possibilities.

As pipe cleaners, feathers and beads take on new faces and bodies, in magical moments many of the children are realizing that their own unique puppets are within themselves waiting to be born of their own imaginations. The Wizard has opened up a whole new world, their eyes and hands and minds will bring exciting creatures into being.

Wizard unfurls more magic to the wide-eyed children.

"Turn a teapot upside down -- spout becomes a snout. Add a mop of hair, some googly eyes, stick your hand inside to manipulate and voila --!"

A yellow plastic lemon adorned with an orange cardboard beak, a few colourful feathers and a tiny cardboard plate for a hat, becomes an engaging duck finger puppet.



FIGURE 4

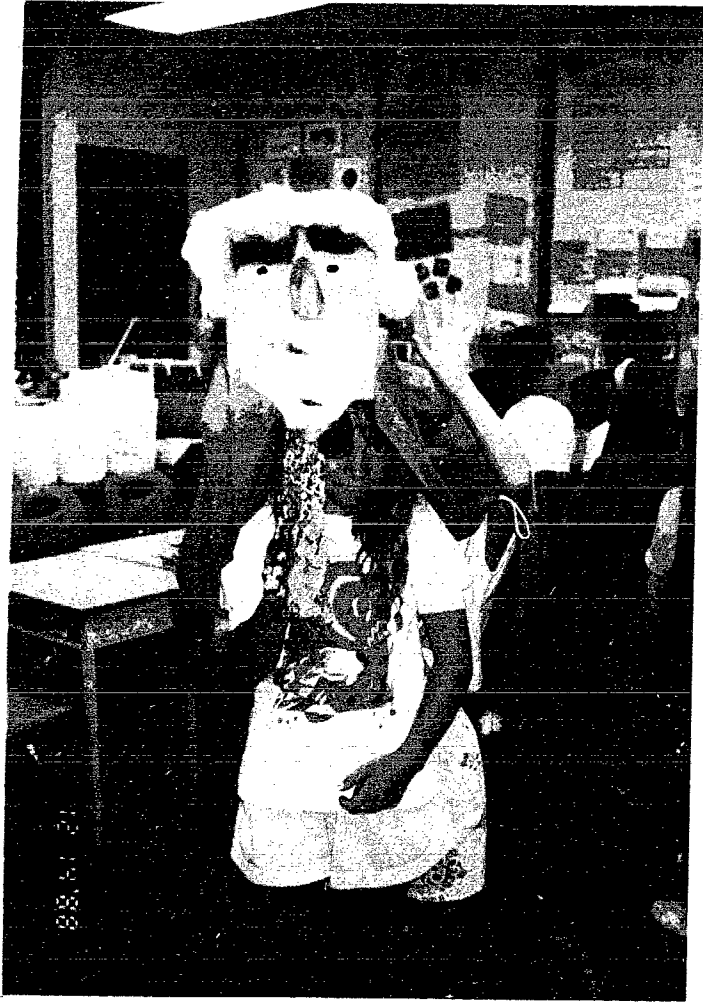


FIGURE 5

Panti-hose stuffed with cotton, the top twisted into a bun, a "granny" becomes a reality.

At the end of the magic session the children spend several minutes sketching a few of their ideas (They are making a careful plan for their puppets.) Figure 6 shows how Tammy sketched her ideas and then made an intricate stringed puppet. They don't know yet that the Wizard is steering the journey which will open up their imaginations.

They start to find interesting shapes from the magic boxes. At this stage their inspired and unconscious choices are also helping spark their personal creativity.

The Unique Creation

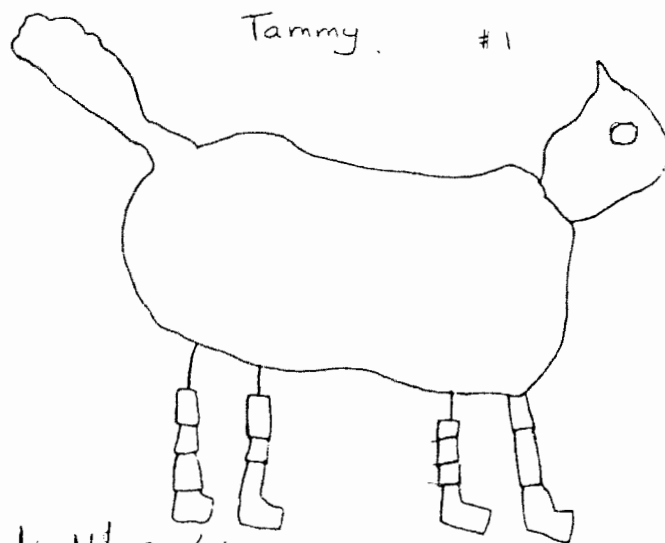
(Session #2)

Today the Wizard waves a wand. This is the day to get down to tasks. Though the children don't know it (nor do they care!) the British Columbia provincial curriculum is actually the backdrop to this educational magic show.

As they position themselves at tables they open up their bags of cast-off treasures chatting eagerly about their plans for each unique creation.

The Wizard (a Scottish Canadian who often uses French) reminds the children that the eyes on the puppet are "tres importants" -- black on white for the best theatrical effect. "Your ideas on your drawings may change as the puppet takes shape. Don't worry about this -- just let the puppet evolve. Be bold, be brave, be imaginative! Go ahead," says the Wizard. They know what to do.

The playful chatty atmosphere quietens. The sound in the room is like the steady hum of bees going about their business. The Wizard is armed with a 1990s wand -- a glue gun to speed up magical transformations.



bottles ✓
Hamburger boxes ✓
Trit ✓
spindles (cotton reels)
felt / fur
stick ✓
String ✓



FIGURE 6

Some children pull out long tubes and arrange them on the floor. Some rummage through the odds and ends bin in the back of the room to find specific objects. Jed needs some pants-hose to cover and shape both jaws of his creature -- "the hinges need extra glue," he says. Large meat trays and thick chunks of foam are in great demand for creatures with snapping jaws. (They learn very quickly that these puppets have to work and be durable.)

At one table Kelly is laughing and talking. He can't seem to get started. The Wizard asks him about his sketch and helps him see that a malt whiskey bottle can make a black, sleek body. Stefan, who loves birds, wants to join two long tubes for a mouth. He is advised that if he wants the bird to move its beak he might cut the tubes shorter. (Many children have chosen materials that when hinged make a mouth puppet -- verbal expression is supremely important in our world and the puppets reflect that the children are fully aware of this.)

Bonny holds her head down a lot. She has embarked on her puppet, a wide-mouthed duck, but is not progressing far. She has selected the right materials but they won't fit together like she wants. She says, "It's not working."

Sometimes, the Wizard can't make the magic come. At times like this another child will often work the wonders. David shows Bonny how to make the mouth move. "You can cut a small square with the x-acto knife and push the mouth in," he says. Right on David!

Courtney drapes pink chiffon around her meat trays. A princess is born.

Scott puts bright eyes inside wooden curtain rings. He wants them to stick up at the top of the head. He wants to add black furry eyebrows and more fur for sideburns (Figure 7).

Greg is already talking to his puppet. Ben's puppet is singing, "Food, glorious food." They want to go together to the office and show the principal.



FIGURE 7

Sheldon pipes up, "I dreamed about my puppet and how I was going to make it." When finished he says "Mine works. I thought mine was going to be way too hard." (Figure 8).

Amy and Stephanie operate their puppet together (Figure 9). They seem to gain comfort from working with each other on a new project.

It is very important the Wizard states, to name your puppet immediately, thus helping to establish its personality (more reinforcement of verbal expression).

The room looks like a bomb exploded. The last few minutes of the session is devoted to clean-up. Yet, in ten minutes everything is back to normal, supplies are stacked neatly back on shelves.

The rush and scurry are over as the recess bell rings. The Wizard crumples into a seat while faces of every shape and size stare out from the window ledge. The results are impressive. (See Figures 7-9). The magic worked in terms of student reaction and personal satisfaction. As the months ahead will show, the steady release of their imaginative powers will unleash talents they, and the Wizard, have yet to discover. It is a journey towards self-discovery but today felt like a lot of fun!



FIGURE 8



FIGURE 9

Analysis

"Come to the edge," he said.

They said: We are afraid.

Come to the edge, he said.

They came.

He pushed them ... and they flew." (Apollinaire, cited in Eisner, 1985, p. 320)

The preceding story is factual. I saw and heard the events and the words in it. I am the Wizard. It was easier for me to present the story by assuming a role which helped me look through the window at the magic as well as peering out of its centre.

By using my own imagination in the role of the Wizard I have deliberately tried to free my study of pedagogical description and have you witness the art of puppetry in my classroom -- a place where children freely thinking can -- and do -- achieve much of what they and we wish them to learn and know.

While capturing the richness of children creating their own unique puppets and stories I discovered more deeply what is really happening. First, I will explain what I observed more closely about the sessions. I observed that some students were able to produce a puppet that was unique and able to be manipulated in an interesting way. For many of the students their puppets were copies of what they had already seen and liked. Two students found they simply couldn't solve the problem of how to make a dragon with a moving mouth and gave up to make something easier. The students are faced with looking at objects and thinking in new ways but for some of them this will require further practice and more information.

As the students created their puppets, there was an atmosphere of excitement. I observed that most of them worked with a friend and also noted those who obviously preferred to work on an idea on their own. I saw that some of the more intricate puppets were completed by children who were not only working on their own, but who had also planned various stages of the making on their drawings. The students were being challenged because not only were they required to create a puppet, but also the puppet had to move effectively. They soon discovered that there are many varieties of puppets and that they move differently in different styles of theatres.

My other observations included an assessment of which students were more inhibited and those who accepted the challenge with more confidence.

I will conclude with observations about the achievement of the objectives. The sessions achieved some of the objectives, but there was too much for the students to learn. The activities should have been structured, so that each one focussed upon a specific objective to achieve a particular skill development area. Also the amount of materials should have been limited because there was simply too much for the students to choose, especially for those students who cannot seem to get started or those who are unable to solve problems of construction and those who cannot visualize the finished product.

Second, I will explain in a broader sense what is really happening, why puppets are educationally worthwhile and are the key to success in teaching other subjects.

By telling children, "Let's imagine that this bottle can be made into whatever you wish it to be" we give them back their own power. We show them that they have power over a creation of their own. In releasing their imaginations so the students can create in their own way there is no external pressure and so they are

able to step outside themselves or outside the roles they feel we expect of them. They are being empowered and they have a responsibility to what they have created. They learn about sharing and communicating this sense. They like their puppets so much they want to tell other people about them. Ben and Greg couldn't wait to rush down to the Principal's office and make him laugh with their puppets singing. You want them to learn how to tell people in a clear way about their puppets. They learn verbal expression.

Puppetry is not just a freeing of the imagination. I use it to teach artistic discipline and encourage self-discipline in the children. The fundamental point in releasing imagination through an arts discipline is that children are encouraged to enjoy school fully and to enjoy learning other subjects, as extensions of themselves and their own thinking.

This brings me to the following question: Why am I a teacher so hooked on the arts? For me, they are a teaching tool for everything else. Puppetry gives the teacher a vehicle for integrating literature, music, art, science, math and other areas of study. This integration of subject matter and creative work provides a dynamic learning situation. Cooperative learning is more likely to be successful if you say, "Here, it's yours -- go for it" or as Apollinaire said, "He pushed them ... and they flew" (Eisner, 1985, p. 320). The arts are challenging, exciting and colourful. "The arts are the connecting links that can involve students creatively in their own learning and help them to see the interrelation of all knowledge" (Eisner, 1988, p. 19).

The arts have a value in and for themselves as forms of expression and understanding. The children come to appreciate the demands and rewards of working with a particular art form for its own sake. An important educational goal should be to promote aesthetic appreciation in all the arts. Puppetry fosters

aesthetic appreciation because it is an all-encompassing art form that has a magical attraction to children, that makes teaching more effective and enjoyable.

I have had success in other subjects because of what I have been doing in this integrated arts work. The children seem more responsible and responsive to learning as a whole. They do their more formal math, spelling, and reading homework relatively effortlessly. They seem to see them as necessary elements in all that is happening. On a subconscious level they seem to see me as the Wizard, taller than teacher.

Each child has power and control. Each has charge of his or her own puppet. They are total owners of their puppets -- the creations of their own minds.

For example, a shy, unsocialized child can be freed from overwhelming self-consciousness (Carlson, 1969; Crawford, 1962; Johnson, 1966; Leyser & Wood, 1980). Precocious children recognize the effects of their behaviour (Dinkmeyer, 1970, 1973; Leyser & Wood, 1980) and develop different attitudes accordingly.

When children are allowed to bring something out of their own minds and have it go through all the actions that are important to them, what a feeling they must have. Sometimes, for the first time in their lives they have ownership of their own mental processes. Of course the children don't see it in these terms. But they do seem to feel free, happy, energized.

Puppetry is valuable because children really want to make this character work in every sense. Puppetry is a somewhat sophisticated theatre art form, which captures children's imagination.

Puppets are three-dimensional and actually move and operate. Children are very practical -- they see the need to make their creatures work properly. They are not told that this is art or this script is today's reading. It isn't necessary. It is

more interesting and enjoyable to do art, reading, comprehension, etc., albeit sometimes "in disguise" as puppet wizardry.

Drawing profiles, using textural materials, and learning certain words can be done more formally if needed. The children are too preoccupied with how their puppets will work to see the formal learning associated with puppetry as "boring schoolwork."

Maria Montessori believed that to release children's imagination you must first let them sensually explore the activity in a concrete, manual form. Puppetry is one of the most concrete art forms you can find because you are actually making three-dimensional creations work. You build stories and lifestyles around the puppet's being or personality. Children fundamentally and intuitively understand this and they create stories, dramatic plays and other connected arts activities, often with total concentration.

Art encourages individualism but children will tend to cooperate because they begin to see the need to share if a group project is going to be made to work. That is the way of any society in which individuals "get along."

In September the children were asked, "How do you feel about working with a partner (names pulled out of a hat) to create a puppet skit? Half the class said they preferred working by themselves because: "People boss me around." "I cannot make my own decisions." "We cannot agree." "My partner did all my thinking" (parent clarified child's thoughts so a response could be written in a dialogue journal). "It depends on who you have to work with."

Two months later, the children were asked to respond to the same question, after considerable integrated puppetry activities. All of them, except three "felt more comfortable working with each other." They said, "I know everyone's personality."

"Everyone has great ideas." "You can trust them" "You feel proud." "You know what they like so you don't disagree."

Children need a strong sense of themselves before they can be part of society. This is evident by the children's comments. They are allowed, through puppetry, to discover who they are as individuals. The puppet is the extension of the child's personality.

By releasing their imaginative powers and learning the rules and disciplines of a multi-faceted art form -- puppetry -- the children gain a respect for many aspects of the process. They enjoy learning how to make a successful puppet and creating stories around its personality. When we show them the joy in learning and making something work because of their own efforts and diligence, they appreciate this can happen in other school subjects too.

Scenario 2: Making Puppets and Students Come Alive

Objectives

1. To introduce puppetry as a performing art by having the children learn improvisation.
2. To make puppets come alive by teaching some simple manipulation techniques.
3. To establish a conducive atmosphere for creating stories.
4. To show how dialogue develops character.

"The puppet is the actor in his primitive form." (Shaw, 1978, p. 56)

The most important part of puppetry is not the puppets, but what they do. It is the job of the puppeteer to make a dragon frightening, a witch wicked or a princess kind and good. A beautiful puppet with nothing to do is no fun at all, but a puppeteer can make a mitten or a sock into an exciting character.

"Theatre Etiquette" Sets the Ground Rules

The students gather around to listen to the Wizard. "First -- Theatre Etiquette!" (This is the Wizard's way of setting ground rules.)

"A certain magic is created when puppets touch -- but if they fight they get wrecked. If there is a fight it should be a clever one that doesn't damage the puppets despite the fact that they are holding swords."

"There should also be a lead up to the fight and a satisfactory solution," Wizard says.

"Puppets love to hear children laugh. They particularly like the audience to respond to their requests".

"Often puppeteers have to think quickly and change the puppets' dialogue to suit the audience's response. As hand puppets are so convincing in their movements and capable of being aggressive, the audience may respond to a puppet's dilemma by calling out, 'Hey, look out! Behind you! Danger!'" (Figure 10).

And Gets Things Under Way

The teacher-Wizard explains improvisation. They are told to invent any situation and have their puppets speak for two minutes. Each child is to work with one partner so there is maximum interaction. Their skits must have a beginning, a middle and an end.

Time is also devoted to suggesting various moves for handling different types of puppets so they can run, sleep, talk, and so on. The puppets' movements bring them alive and make them comical.

For extra ideas, a variety of cards containing dilemma skits and skits that begin with "please" are propped up against the blackboard. (To get started, some children find security in being able to read a few suggested ideas.)

There is a flurry of chatter and excitement as they launch themselves into their improvised skits.

As at this stage, the children have not worked with each other before, the teacher-Wizard observes the social interplay rather than the quality of language spoken in the skits.

Some children can't decide what idea to choose. (Most have never done this before.) The Wizard models a skit of a puppet grandfather character talking to a puppet child about her disappointment over a birthday present of stationery. The children get the gist of it and then go off to try it on their own again.



FIGURE 10



FIGURE 11

The puppets are being brought to life. And here again, we remind ourselves that puppetry is a performing art. The puppeteer is the artist, and the puppet is the instrument through which he or she creates living theatre. This performing element of puppetry cannot be emphasized enough.

Dialogue Develops Character

Making up dialogue is probably the surest way to develop genuine puppet character. Improvising skills with the voice helps develop the puppet's voice and its emotional reactions to various situations. How would your puppet character react at the dinner table, at the zoo, or at a birthday party?

The Wizard watches and listens, hearing children using small, squeaky voices with small puppets; in contrast large, growly voices discuss who will do what and when. There is some disagreement as pairs make decisions about what will work best. Lots of laughter—It all sounds like children playing in the backyard.

Wizard sees puppets jiggling in an attempt to show they are speaking, even though some are without moving mouths. Children's faces contort in concentration and others are animated as the words try to match the puppet's movements. Above all, teacher-Wizard sees students cooperating as their puppets bob up and down towards each other.

After fifteen minutes, the children are ready to share their skits. Improvisation should not as a rule be shown to an audience, but both Wizard and class will benefit from the experience of practising theatre etiquette and its constraints.

As the Magic Unfolds

As the puppets come alive with special voices the magic unfolds to a wide-eyed audience. Eyes are riveted on the primitive actions as puppets nod heads, clap hands, bow, creep, and even sleep with breathing and snoring sounds and movements. The audience laughs at their antics and waits eagerly for more. Attention is total. (We are experiencing the spell of puppetry in educational and social terms.)

After each show, the children ask whether puppets could be heard or seen fully. They pay compliments when they have observed or heard a beginning, a middle and an end. They discuss ways to make improvements. They observe and explain clever puppet movements.

Most important of all, the puppeteers are impressed with the ways puppets make the audience laugh.

Analysis

Children play naturally -- it's an inner, unconscious resource they love to use. In puppetry, every child is as important as the next. There is an immediate feeling of accomplishment built into their work. There are no wrong answers.

Specifically, communication, cooperation, concentration, creativity and coordination are being improved. Beyond that, while they are improvising skits using a variety of voices and emotional reactions to the imagined situations, their own spontaneous and original ideas are accepted in a non-critical atmosphere. Consequently, they become empowered to be themselves. This, in turn, unleashes their *imaginative* powers to take risks and experiment, which leads to a sense of personal empowerment—and so on through the cycles of growth and skills development.

One of the best ways of encouraging the unfettered flow of imaginative ideas is to have the children improvise through the "neutral third party" of the puppet. Because they can forget their self-consciousness and become the persona of the puppet, it frees them as performers. They think and act logically "with the puppet" rather than try to follow a formal script, which might or might not be relevant or meaningful to them. Given this sort of "disciplined freedom," children are wonderfully self-expressive and natural creators of stories and dramatic situations.

To make the puppets and a story come together effectively—to come alive—children must learn some puppet manipulation skills. Learning to manipulate puppets properly builds confidence for the user and pride in the professional look of the puppet activities on stage. It requires *concentration* and a willingness to practice. As concentration and practice are fundamental ingredients of successful learning, I am convinced that the basic skills students acquire in developing proper manipulation of puppets is an educationally valid and powerful learning experience.

Puppet manipulation, of course, helps students develop fine motor control of fingers and hands and coordination of hand, eye and the spoken word. The children want the puppets to look "alive" to the audience so they quickly realize they need to practice to achieve credible theatrical effects and be successful in the puppet theatre. Good coordination will benefit them in so many other areas of their lives and education.

The puppets in action motivate dialogue, which can later be transformed into written forms as stories or plays. The children invent realistic conversation as the puppets take shape (Figure 11). The words tumble out uninhibitedly with emotion, so vocabulary is enlarged without the effort of a structured lesson. The children choose their words with force and confidence. They learn to sharpen the

edges of their vocabulary and hone their sense of meaning. Here are some examples of brainstorming brief conversations between characters.

Pre-writing Samples

Number 1

Squire: "We are being attacked by millions of knights on horseback!"

King: "Get the knights ready for battle. Knights come, get the archers ready for battle."

Knight: "Yes Sire, I take my leave."

King: "Get the murder holes ready."

Squire: "The knights are ready to fire from the battlements."

Serf: "Could you spare some food for me? My family is starving to death."

Knight: "Not now I've got to go to a tournament."

Number 2

King: "Open the portcullis in the name of the King!"

Guard: "Yes, your Majesty."

King: "It seemly happened that I got here fast."

Knight: "My finest serfs will show you to your room."

King: "By my sword, this room is lush!"

Serf: "If I may be so bold sir -- I like that Lincoln green you're wearing."

Number 3

King: "Knight, welcome to my castle -- put down your sword. Squire open the gatehouse and the drawbridge. Put up the banners, get ready for the feast -- get the jester."

Squire: "Yes, your majesty."

In the process of sharpening their sense of words, the students demonstrate that puppetry introduces new concepts, builds verbal self-confidence and develops

fluency. Thus the puppeteers discover that they can try out different voices, invent a wide range of dialects and adapt what they say to fit the needs of the audience. Here they are using the art of rhetoric.

As the children improvise, they begin telling stories with creative flare, imagination and humour, as the following samples of dialogue show.

Manager: "This young man tried to hold us up officer."

Policeman: "You have to go to jail for committing a crime."

Mom: "Yes dear. Grandma just called and she is feeling hotter than a volcano."

Rad Red Riding Hood: "You are not my Grampa, you are the wolf. From my natural instincts *he* never learned to say those words!"

The puppet's language is rich with colourful comparisons. With this invented conversation, the children are truly and colourfully expressing feelings.

The puppeteers are carried away by their own acting and the response of their audience. In puppet plays the puppeteer-performers feel free to act and respond where otherwise they might be reluctant to express feelings as actors. The audience shares a common experience which contains a personal meaning for each individual (Figure 12).

In keeping with this idea Reich (1972) says, "Under the spur of an audience, the children can be encouraged to speak effectively -- concentrating on the clarity of their ideas, pronunciation, and choice of vocabulary. The technique can facilitate oral expression" (p. 621).

The children responded to the following question: How does an audience help your puppet plays?



FIGURE 12

Ben: "It cheers you on and makes the play successful. I like to hear the kids laugh."

Myra: "I like to perform in front of an audience and I love to hear them laugh."

Kelly: "It feels real good because you can do more funny things and more cool stunts."

Jordan: "I enjoy having an audience because they clap and it feels really good and I like people watching me."

Brandon: "It feels like people really like you. It helps me feel good not embarrassed when they laugh I know that they like the play."

Ian: "The audience is what basically keeps the magic. It basically helps the play be exciting."

David: "If I have an audience my puppet plays gets better and better and if I don't hear laughing I lose it."

Krista H.: "It helps me because when I have my class watching me I think it's okay to make mistakes."

Two-thirds of the class indicated that it was the audience's laughter that spurred them on. The children enjoy the laughter and the excitement of the audience's response to certain puppet antics. This two-way communication between puppets and spectators gives children a chance to be funny and be themselves. This in turn stimulates interactive use of their imaginations and shows them what they can accomplish together.

Conclusions

Drama *humanizes* the curriculum. Bringing the puppets to life ensures active involvement by students in the classroom, which, in turn, contributes to their personal growth. Drama is *invented conversation* ... dialogue that reflects the experiences of

real life. Dorothy Heathcote describes drama as taking a microcosm of life and expanding it" (Wagner, 1976, p. 27). The words that are transmitted by human beings in an actual or invented dialogue move "in tension", for no two people ever mean quite the same thing. Each brings to the dialogue a different set of experiences and feelings.

As has been pointed out by Friedman (1978): "At each point of the dialogue, understanding and misunderstanding are interwoven. From this tension of understanding and misunderstanding comes the interplay of openness and closeness, expression and reserve that makes every genuine dialogue" (p. 91).

The goal of all education is to enable students to mature to the point where they can engage in this genuine dialogue. Michael Oakeshott (1983) said, "Our whole culture is nothing but an extended dialogue, a conversation begun in the primeval forests and made more articulate in the course of centuries" (p. 55).

Because of the partnership grouping in puppetry, *all* the students interact and converse. It is often the more confident children who do most of the speaking and the boys seem to be orally more aggressive than the girls. However, puppetry does allow shy and withdrawn children many opportunities to improve their communication skills and cooperation and to come out of their shyness naturally and at their own pace.

The puppeteers are involved in considerable cooperative effort. They gain comfort from working with friends on something new. They will also become more deeply intimate with their new classmates because they will only feel comfortable about creating together if they are given time to get to know each other first. This time needs to be built into the educational process. Many children have imaginative ideas they want to put forward, but it is hard if they are feeling insecure and uncomfortable.

Children need practice in cooperative learning to make gains in self-esteem, appreciation of school, time-on-task and attendance. Puppetry is a positive way for children to practice working together.

Krista: "I enjoy working with Tammy because she thinks of a lot of good ideas."

Tyler: "I like it because you find out different things about the person you're working with."

Active involvement and getting along with people are important aspects of the *Learning in the Year 2000* document (Province of British Columbia, 1990).

Scenario 3: Puppetry -- A Means of Creativity in Art
and the Language Arts

Objectives

1. To construct a basic glove puppet with a human form using sculpting materials for the head and fabric pieces to create a three-part sculptured glove. This art project will take three weeks to complete.

Steps for Construction

- Step 1 - The puppet head frame
 - Step 2 - Paper mache the head
 - Step 3 - Covering the head
 - Step 4 - Painting the head
 - Step 5 - Making the hair
 - Step 6 - Making the puppet glove
2. To brainstorm and invent scenes and endings of well-known stories.
 3. To create different characters with this basic glove puppet using very simple scripts (see Appendix B).
 4. To introduce shadow puppetry.
 5. To learn how to put on a puppet play so that students are able to write their own play eventually.
 6. To learn how to write a play.

Session 1: Creating a Human Glove Puppet

To motivate students to put on puppet plays, we watched a professional puppeteer called Luman Coad, who gave a delightfully funny and polished performance of Little Ghost Gilroy, using hand puppets. The appeal of this play was the humour and skillful manipulation of the hand puppets.

To motivate reluctant students to create stories, write dialogue, and act out original plays, the Wizard allows the children to fly free with their imaginations. They are given sculpting materials and time to create glove puppets with a human form (Figures 13-16). The Wizard also shows the magic of enthusiasm which the children capture and release with their own vibrant enthusiasm. Thus are unfurled the valuable learning experiences of creating, writing and performing.

From a crunched-up newspaper, layers of *papier mâché*, there emerges a lively and identifiable character in a colourful suit of clothes. A touch of tempera paint, beads for eyes, knitting wool for hair—and the puppet becomes a character in a play. The onlooker becomes captivated by his believable movements and aggressiveness (Figures 13-16).

Session 2: Pre-writing Steps With Shadow Puppets

While the glove puppet heads are being completed, important pre-playwriting steps get the children thinking imaginatively and involve the more reticent students to continue working on improvisation.

Wizard selects various stories and encourages the children to discuss closing scenes. She chooses stories involving a lot of action and well defined characters. Folk and fairy tales are useful because the children are familiar with the characters and can easily identify with them. Yet, though children are familiar with a story, Wizard wants them to put the sparkle of imagination into their speaking and writing to bring out new tales and adventures. For example, a traditional Russian fairy tale called *The Firebird* by Ludek Manasek, is chosen for inventing an exciting scene.



FIGURE 13

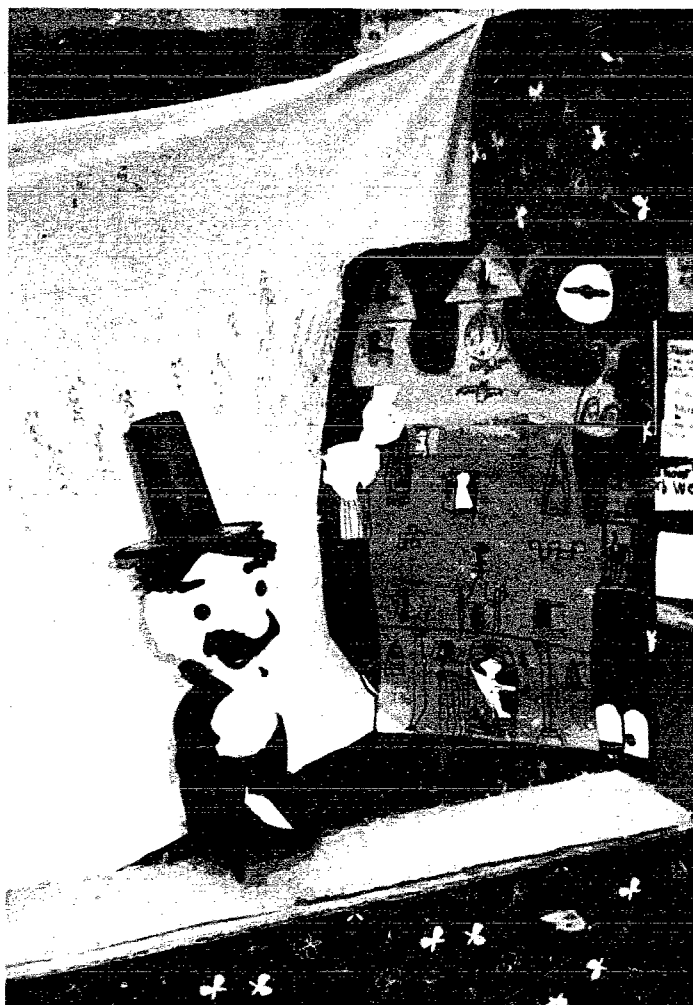


FIGURE 14



FIGURE 15

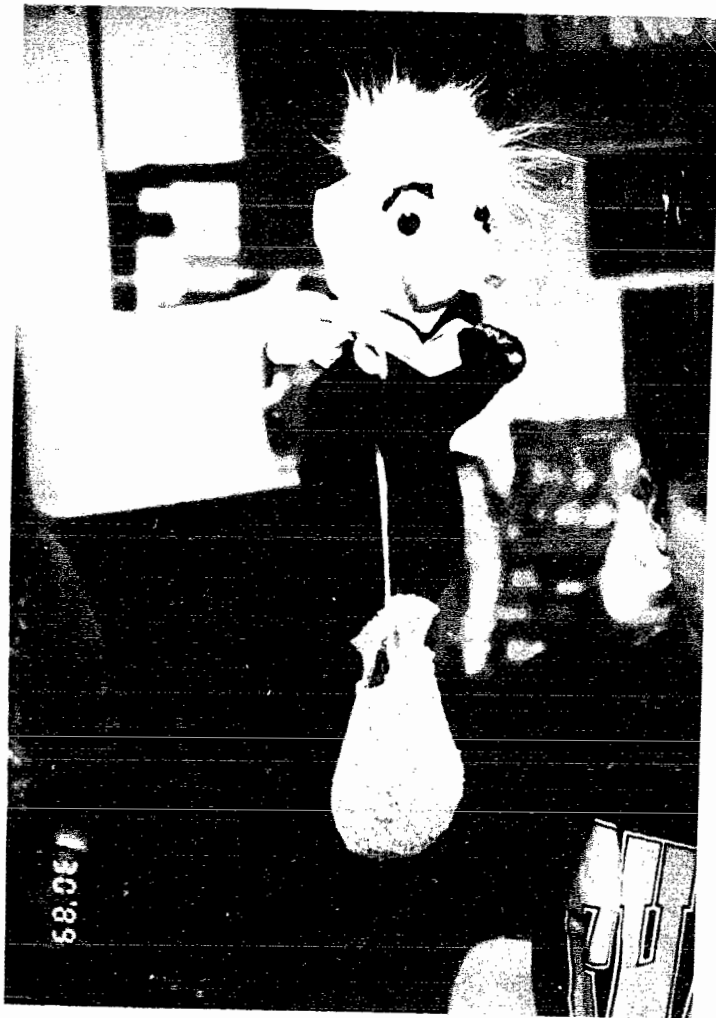


FIGURE 16

This story has been written with a philosophical imagination. Over all this tale of insurmountable difficulties and the marvels with which they are solved glows the golden light of the Firebird. This poetic and mythical creature holds within its body the omens of life and death -- and everlasting renewal.

The children invent their own impossible tasks, which have to be fulfilled by the Prince. In small groups they brainstorm and agree on a truly impossible task. Then they write down the main points of their scene (Figures 17 and 19). Wizard demonstrates how to make simple shadow puppets from black paper using straws for rods, which the children use to hold and operate with (Figures 18 and 20). Their shadow puppets are easy to make and with the additional coloured cellophane, feathers and grasses, exciting animated scenes are conjured up. Ideas range from the Titanic being lifted from the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean; the wind blowing up an incredible storm; swinging across a forest fire on a rope, sailing across a rough ocean filled with deadly sharks and putting out a volcano. They tell the scene in their own words.

Each scene is performed with coloured lighting gels, which makes the screen different colours. This gives the scene a theatrical effect.

Session 3: Reader's Theatre and Performing Plays

Now that the hand puppets are completed and the children have improvised a variety of scenes in different stories, they are ready to embark on a selection of short plays (see Appendix).

They spend time reading, memorizing and performing short, simple plays which also have lots of action and humourous characters.

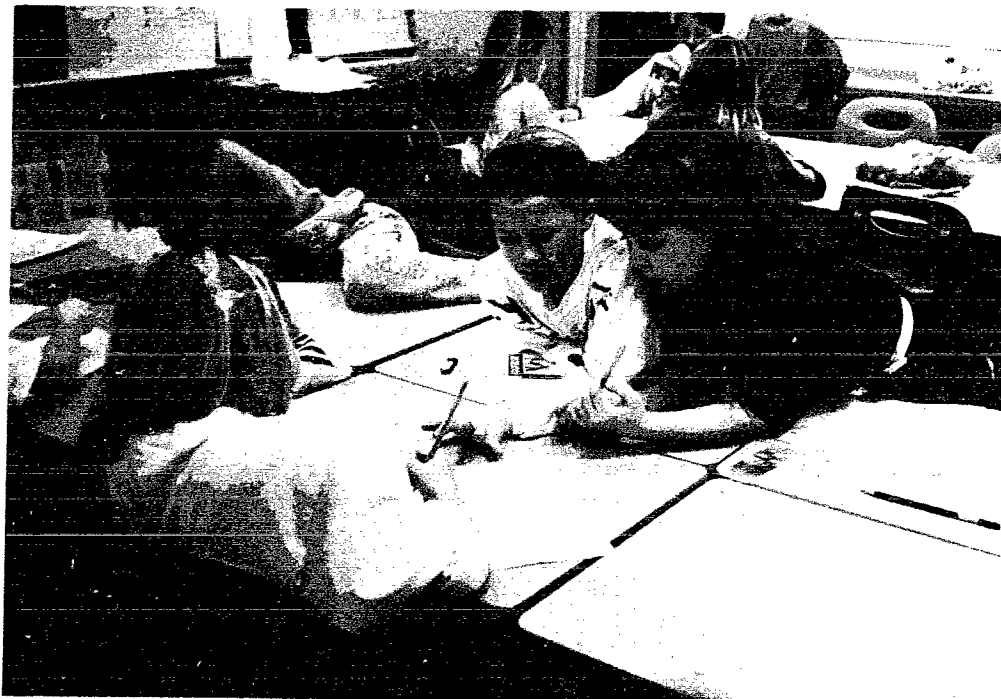


FIGURE 17

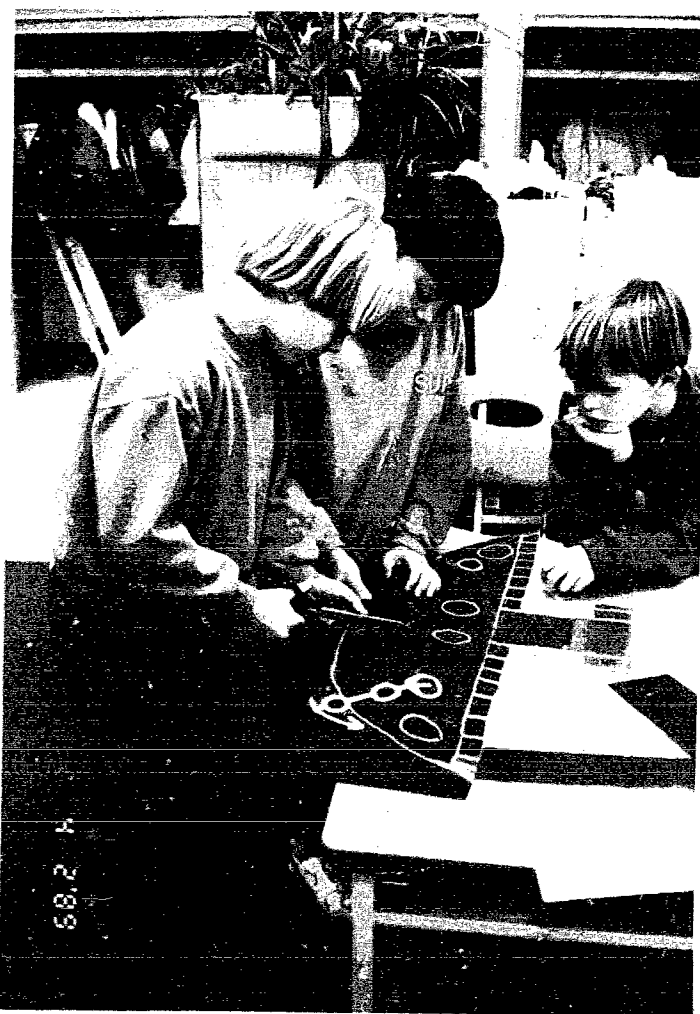


FIGURE 18

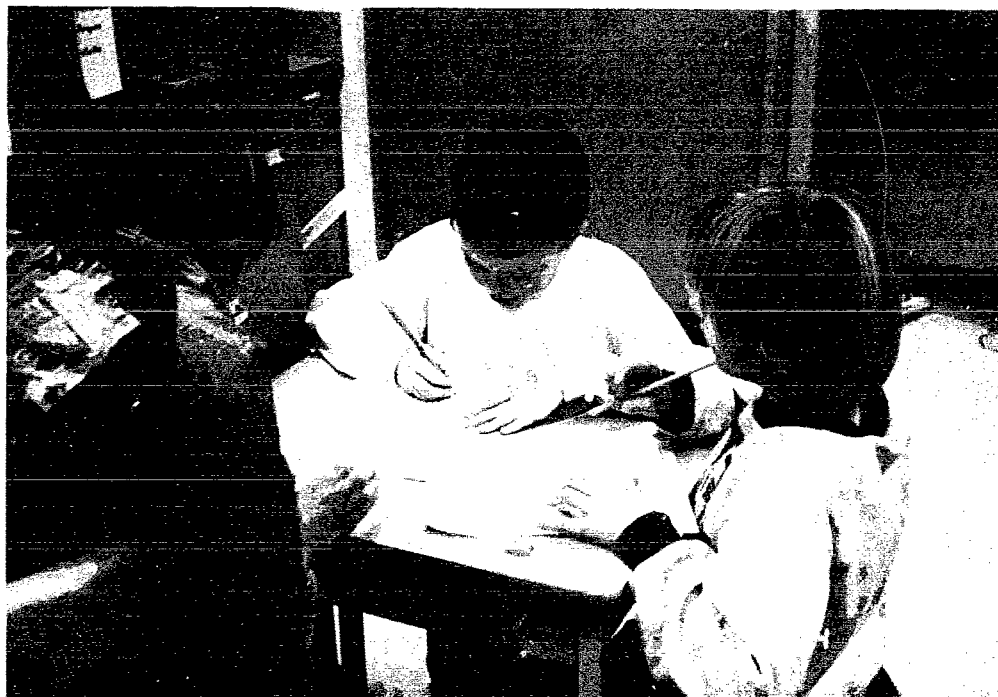


FIGURE 19



FIGURE 20

The children are eager to get involved in the process.

- They read the plays in groups of three
- They decide on which child will play a certain character
- They identify their own speaking parts with bright felt pens
- They work out puppet movements.

Other questions bring stimulating discussions (Figures 21 and 22)

pertaining to:

- who should build props
- who will furnish background noises
- who makes the background scenery .

As the children prepare the plays, they have fun changing glove puppet characters into waiters, postmen, bank robbers, boxers, grannies and ghosts (Figures 23-28). Cape, scarf and basket transform Rapunzel into Red Riding Hood (Figure 23). New wig piece, floppy hat and long scarf, with pieces of velcro and *voilà!* -- bank robber becomes a shoemaker (Figure 26). Moustaches, hair pieces and glasses are whipped on and off as puppets wait in the wings to play their part. Wolves are in great demand.

Wizard praises the children's ingenuity as they create intricate props such as detailed dog kennels, shop frontages. (It's Universal studios!) (Figure 29)

A potpourri of puppets prance and pop up with ingenious props. (Use of "props" helps to promote action.) They put expression into the words they have practiced, they focus on puppet movement, and they enjoy the combined humorous words and actions. Each child is using the total talent he or she has to offer (Figure 30).

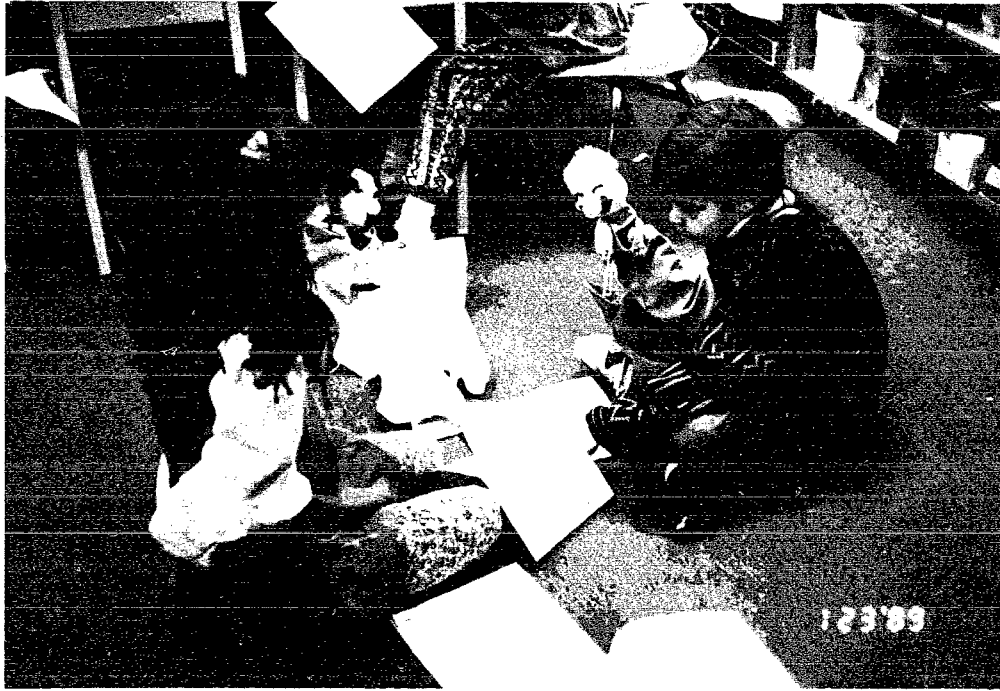


FIGURE 21



FIGURE 22



FIGURE 23



FIGURE 24



FIGURE 25



FIGURE 26

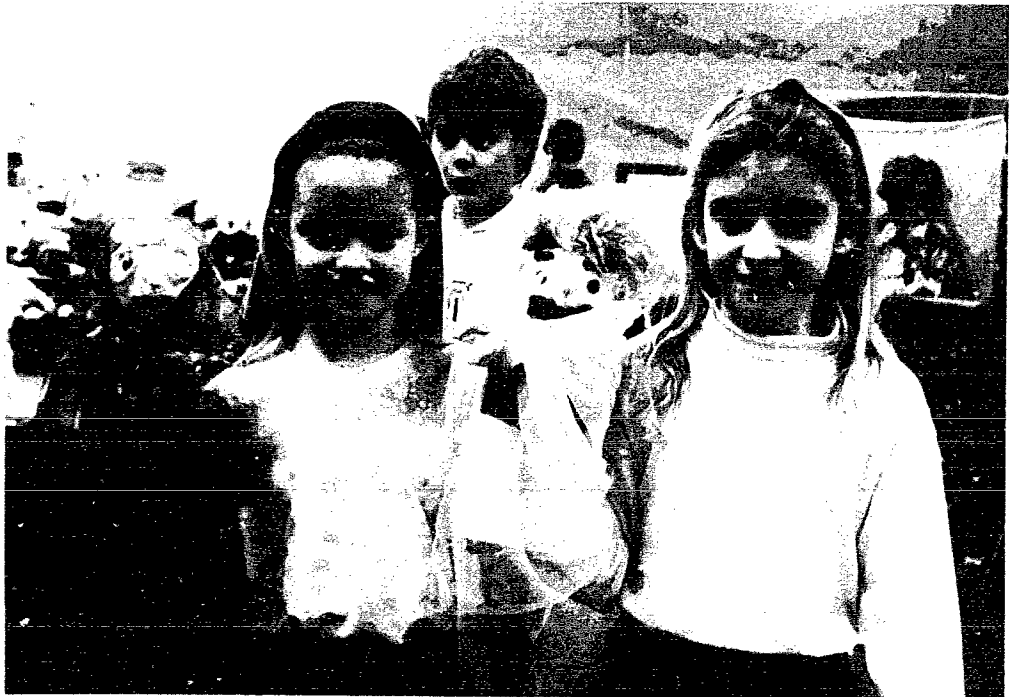


FIGURE 27



FIGURE 28



FIGURE 29

Session 4: Play Writing

Raving Red Riding Hood is the play which sparks and ignites the children's interest in writing their own plays.

Today the class is in different groups of two or three, a number which works well with third and fourth graders. (Though older children can work in larger groups, the backstage area usually accommodates no more than three.)

The students are ready to decide on an adventure and the character each person will portray (Figure 31). Some students write down dialogue the moment it is spoken, without giving it a chance to change (Figure 32).

Wizard says, "Improvise first and feel comfortable with the play you have created. *Then* write down the dialogue and scene cues so as not to forget them." (Figure 33).

Children find it very natural to go from talking through their ideas to writing them down. One group of children is ready to write their dialogue. The Wizard gives each speaker a different coloured paper to cut into strips. She says, "Each of you write your dialogue on your own coloured paper and tape it down onto the one piece of construction paper which is the backing. As you invent dialogue tape the sentences to the background sheet. The strips of paper can be lifted off and moved around if you want to introduce a new idea. As the group reads their part of the play, the different coloured paper gives you clues on when to speak" (Figure 34).

As the performance day for the children's original plays draws near, the classroom hums like a hive as props and scenery are being constructed or painted and sound effects fill the air (Figures 35-38).

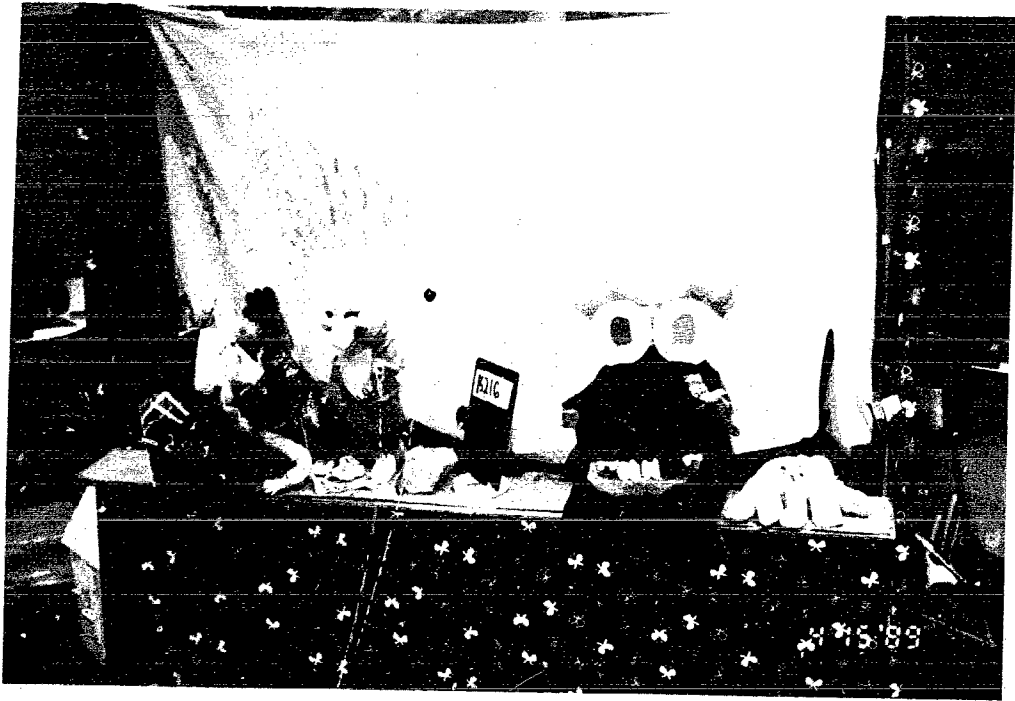


FIGURE 30



FIGURE 31



FIGURE 32



FIGURE 33



FIGURE 34



FIGURE 35



FIGURE 36



FIGURE 37

Last minute catastrophe -- the existing theatre collapses under the strain of constant use. Children complain that it was too cramped anyway! The Wizard consults the book of magic spells for an instant puppet theatre and comes up with a plank of wood with a hole at each end, two high jump stands and a large sheet (Figure 39). Thanks also to some industrious parents -- it works!.

Children design and draw posters and personal invitations to family, friends and guests from other classes.

Performance day has arrived. The audience claps enthusiastically as each child beams, holding his or her puppet. As each child bows, you wonder where this magic journey will lead to next (Figure 40).

Analysis

Scenario Three's part of the magic journey has lead the children towards creativity, imagination, communication, fun and confidence. They leave behind anxiety, inhibition and self-consciousness. This part of the learning process has allowed the children to fly free with their imaginations in art, writing and performing.

To build confidence and be successful at performing, the children first create glove puppets with a human form. When our principal aim at the beginning of the school year was to release the latch on the children's imaginations, puppets were created from just about anything we could lay our hands on.

However, in using puppets as a teaching aid in the regular curriculum subjects, the glove puppets with human form are more adaptable. They are also whimsical and half-humorous creatures, more direct in their actions, more convincing in their movements and capable of aggressiveness. They are also more suitable for traditional and animal stories and folk tales.



FIGURE 38



FIGURE 39

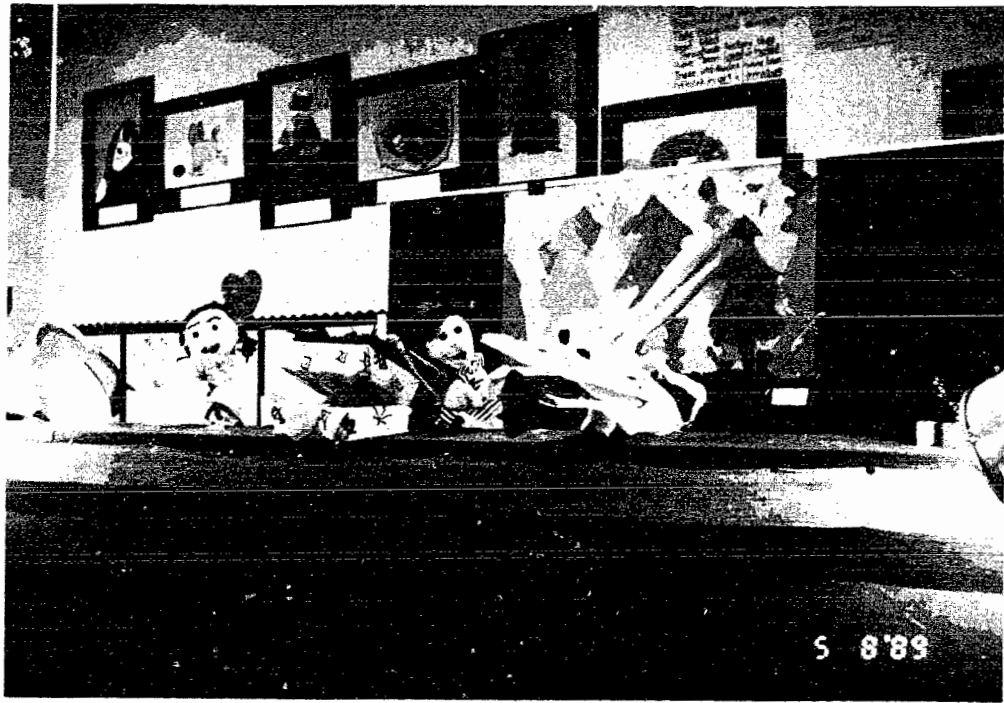


FIGURE 40

From the students' point of view, the most successful puppet-related art activities in making the glove puppet are sculpting the head and features, and making the costume. They enjoy thinking creatively. Almost all the children said that they had fun making the puppets. (Six children wrote that they enjoyed putting on the plays also.) Here is a sampling of their comments:

"I like making stuff for my puppet like coloured clothes for it and accessories like hair, hat, beards and eyes."

"It is fun making the puppets and the props."

"One thing that I like is that you can make interesting things that you like for your puppet."

(Figures 41-42)

Puppetry provides fun (Dillavou, 1954; Kkarasch, 1965).

Most of the children used the word "fun" when describing their favourite puppet activity. The children working with puppets are *involved* so that the interest is high. The *work* of it is seen as fun. Students are becoming experts in a subject by being involved in an art form that has many enjoyable aspects. Active participation is one of the Year 2000 initiatives.

When the basic human glove puppet is completed they learn and practice a variety of puppet movements so that their giants, witches, kings, queens and courtiers, move delightfully across the glove puppet stage. They are truly learning the discipline of this art form.



FIGURE 41



FIGURE 42

This is especially difficult for them to learn at this stage because they tend to be concentrating on what they are saying, and managing all the props and scenery changes as well. However, movement is the essence of the art form and watching a professional puppeteer such as Luman Coad of Coad Canada Puppets, they learn that it is the puppet's *movements* that bring it alive, in combination with the words that the puppet says.

Before attempting to write their own plays Wizard gives the students simple scripts to read, practise and memorize (most children seem to enjoy this and find it easy to memorize their lines).

From the children's point of view the six prepared plays (see Appendix B) are most successful at this stage of the process because, to quote some of them: "You could just get on with the play" and "Put more expression into it".

It gives them a chance to appreciate the complete process from puppet making to performance. And as they are freed from inventing words at this stage they can concentrate on manipulation techniques, how to organize the puppets in sequence ready for performing, make props and prepare sound effects.

Their voices become confident, full of expression and emotion. Some children think on their feet and ad lib as lines are forgotten. As they learn the puppet movements, and their characters become animated, then the words become bolder. At the same time they learn strict economy in dialogue.

The plays are well received by the participating students and younger audiences. Quick success is achieved.

The children compare their experience of improvisation to using a prepared play.

Michael: "It was lots of fun doing a skit because I could make all my ideas up."

Kirsten: "Junk puppets were funner than hand puppets because you can say your own lines."

Krista: "I like using my words because I thought it was easier to remember than having to learn lines."

Jennifer: "I liked it because I could make up my own words. It was fun making up my own words and putting them in sentences and putting the sentences in a story."

Sheldon: "It's a lot easier doing a skit than reading a script because you have to remember all the words. If you make up your own words you can have all your own ideas in the skit. If you forget something on the script you get in a muddle."

Tyler: "I thought it was quite harder to do a skit because you had to think harder about the words."

Ben: "I thought making up your own words was neat. It was also hard."

Jordan: "I liked using a script. I noticed that some people were using expression."

Krista V.H.: "I think having lines is the best because you could learn the lines and it was easier to do."

Bonny: "It was easier for me because you could memorise the lines."

Jennifer: "I liked it because you didn't have to spend time on making up your own words. It was easier when you could just get on with the play."

Myra: "I sort of liked it because I could practice my words."

Even though the students are putting on plays using prepared scripts, they are also going through the motions of thinking imaginatively by brainstorming brief conversations between characters. This gives them practice in writing economical dialogue.

There is a strong divergence of opinion as to what puppet plays should be acted in schools. There are educationists who feel that the choice of play should arise from the children's interests and that the "greatest value of puppetry is to be found in the psychological and emotional benefits, the play experience itself, and, in puppetry as an art to be practised" (Wall, White, & Philpott, 1965, p. 226). In contrast, there are

others who insist that the plays chosen should "have a direct bearing on the academic work, and that the teaching value should be more obvious and direct " (Wall, White, & Philpott, 1965, p. 226). In this latter view the joy in puppetry may be destroyed.

To ensure that there is continued joy, the students choose ideas for their own plays arising from their interests. Wizard selects fairy tales because the children know the characters and can identify with them. Knowing and identifying helps a child develop realistic dialogue. Wizard uses fairy tales to demonstrate in a more philosophical way how the great literary wealth of any nation has its roots deeply buried in its traditional fairy stories, its folk tales and its ballads. Wizard explains how these have been handed down by word of mouth and have been retold in different ways by the storytellers of successive ages. "Puppeteers, both young and old, in acting out their tales, are playing a part in handing on our great inheritance to children of future generations." (Wall, White, & Philpott, 1965, p. 225)

On a practical level, the Wizard explains how the principal characters in fairy tales are clearly characterized, have dramatic story appeal which always includes an exciting climax and a happy ending. The students write their own fairy tales as a way of understanding universal qualities in fairy tales. This pre-playwriting preparation is quite a long process, but is intended to help the children think deeply and develop imaginative ideas for their own plays.

The Wizard asks the students to reflect by posing the question "How do you get good ideas?" The children replied:

"I get ideas from the T.V., books, puppet shows, other people and my imagination."

"When I read books."

"I think about it and when I think I have a good idea I do it or write it down."

"I start things and I can't stop because I enjoy it."

"I get good ideas by looking at something else and then I think about it and then I think of something better, more detailed." "

I think a lot."

"I think about it and then I get an idea and I write it down."

"I get good ideas because you let me make choices."

"I look at other people's jobs. I get ideas and I mix them together."

Puppetry is such a personal thing, and the operating of a glove puppet so intimate that the desires of the puppeteer must be the first consideration. By choosing their own ideas, they write plays that suit their own personalities and levels of comprehension -- so that they are able to identify completely with their characters.

Puppetry is an ancient art. It has woven bright threads into the history of many nations. There is no need to justify its continuance by deliberately relating it to other subjects and by trying to impose plays or ideas on the students, which are alien to them.

In getting started on their own play writing they now understand how a play works -- that is, one person speaks and the second person responds. They *choose* to use some of the qualities of the fairy tales. They discuss ideas. They plan characters, problem and solution. They decide who will write which character.

This group planning and participation is especially beneficial as they cooperatively plan their particular phase of the play. This is critical thinking with a purpose, and the challenge and stimulation that come from intervention with others is significant for each child. Creativity is further facilitated as suggestions are shared and evaluated, plans are made and revised and new ideas discovered.

"The capabilities and interest of the child and the possibilities of the puppet are the only sound guides to the choice of play, and the expression of the art the only aim".

(Wall, White & Philpott, 1965, p. 226)

Some of the children's plays are simple and appear childish, but by presenting a play of their own, the characters are not foreign to the children's personalities.

There are very few glove-puppet plays published. The professional puppeteer generally writes his or her own plays or adapts stories in his or her way. Some of the children adapt *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. They know these stories well so they write them into scripts. Poor readers get others to help them with a story so they can do a good job of writing their own part. Some with reading difficulties improve in reading skills after working in this way.

Analysis of Creative Writing

In analysing the quality of writing, the Wizard asks herself:

Have the children expressed themselves successfully?

Are they writing without a care in the world?

Are they writing because they are interested?

Do the words flow?

Are they writing their own feelings in the role of their puppet characters?

Is there a strong sense of voice and apparent efforts to engage the reader?

Are the ideas clearly organized, developed and elaborated?

Is there action in the situations created?

Are their ideas imaginative?

Is there a strict economy of dialogue?

Have they put narration and puppet gestures in brackets?

Are there humorous parts?

Have they kept it short?

What emerged from the play writing that I did not expect was the children's strong desire to be humorous with words (see Appendix). They wanted to inject humour into the words and actions so that the audience will giggle, cheer and clap. Humour is difficult enough for any dramatic character, and especially with some puppets that have no hands. The children also understand that puppets bashing one another do not necessarily create audience laughter. So they really have to work hard to invent witty dialogue and clever punch lines. However, it is partly this element that forces the children to play with the words and thus facilitate imaginative writing. Other forms of writing do not always contain such strong humorous anecdotes. Here are some examples selected from the plays:

Sarah: "I'll get you you you you bulldozer!"
"Actually, I mean a bull that sleeps."

Babies: "Let's drool "

Wolf: "Yoo-hoo Red."
Red: "W-w-what was that (taps her head)— I get it I'm on candid camera. Right?"

Narrator: "As the play opens, we find two people walking by a cave in a park. Their names are Ted and Sandra. When, accidentally, a wizard drops a love potion on their heads."

Ted: "I feel diiiiiizzzzzy!"
Sandra: "Soooo doooo III!"
Wizard: "Oh no! That was my love potion."
Ted: "I I I lloveee youuuuuuu. I must kisssss youuuuuuu."
Sandra: "I must kiss you. I must kiss you. I neeeded you."
Ted: "I need Sandra." (Ted crashes through the wall.)

Mom: "Yes dear. Grandma just called. I want you to go over there and give her these goodies I packed for her."

Red Riding Hood: "What did you put in here, the ocean?"

Mom: "I hope you like those air Jordans I got you Budilocks."
Budilocks: "Yea Mom, they are real bouncy." (Budilocks bounces up and down)
"Oh No, I knocked down the threee bears' fence!"

Papa: "Someone's been in my bed too."
Baby: "Some hunk has been in my bed and there he is."

Conclusion

Puppetry is a means of creativity in the Language Arts (English reading, writing, spelling). As the children learn puppet movements and their hand puppets become animated and more aggressive, then the words the children use become vibrant, and filled with fire. They begin looking for stories to write into puppet shows.

Much imagination is required of the children in the process of making the puppets, their props, scenery and the costumes that change the puppet characters. Using a script frees the performers to concentrate on what they are saying and how the puppets are moving.

Because the children achieve a quick success with scripted plays, their confidence is built quickly too. As they work together on a play, they are also improving their interpersonal skills.

Then the scripted plays give them familiarity with their structure. And as they understand what a play is about, they increasingly work together to produce their own imaginative scripts. Children certainly become more creative as suggestions are shared and assessed, plans made and revised, and new ideas discovered and explored.

Scenario 4: Preparing an End-of-Term Production

Objectives

1. To bring all the puppetry work to successful culmination by preparing an end-of-term production.
2. To introduce Japanese Bunraku puppetry.
3. To develop characterization.
4. To integrate shadow puppetry and creative dance which will add original ideas to an existing script and include more students in the final performance.

Introduction

To bring all the puppetry work to successful culmination, an end-of-term production is planned -- one that uses a new and exciting type of puppet; one that combines art, language arts, drama, music, movement and rhythm. Such an event gives the students a chance to perform for an outside audience and allows parents and friends to see and enjoy what the students have learned.

The Wizard's biggest challenge in putting on an end-of-term production is working everyone's characters into a coherent presentation. She wants to avoid having one or two starring characters dominate the whole story.

To meet these challenges, the Wizard first decides on an exciting type of puppetry called *Japanese Bunraku*. This unique rod puppet requires three-children to manipulate it (Figure 43).

Bunraku is a traditional Japanese form of puppetry unlike that of any other in the world. It can achieve a high level of sophistication in both design and manipulation. Bunraku characters are each one operated by a trio of puppeteers.



FIGURE 43

The Wizard also plans to integrate with bunraku puppetry, the surrealistic and magical effects of shadow puppetry, a form believed to have been born in China.

The figures are held up by the main rod, the "rod of life," and have two more rods fixed to their hands to control the movements of their arms and also to give a special delicacy and expressivity to the hand movements. A shadow puppet can be made very easily and quickly (Figures 44 and 45).

Little scenery is used, just the necessary props for the action, cut out, coloured and perforated with the same delicacy as the figures. The children have already experimented and made these puppets from black paper, coloured cellophane and straws as rods.

In selecting a play, the class analysis consists of seven questions:

Does it have a good plot?

Does it have a good resolution?

Are the characters interesting?

What props can be used to help the story line?

Can the play use a punch line? If so, what would be a good one?

Can shadow puppets be used?

Naturally, all these questions cannot be answered at the first session, but they are the questions which will come up during the development of the play, and the children are made aware of them, and think about them and the solution to them.

The children read several plays but *The Chinese Cinderella* allows them to build in their own ideas, as well as create interesting minor characters, like, members of a procession and property men. There is also a part of the play which lends itself to a dream sequence which might suitably be performed with shadow puppets on a screen and has potential as a creative dance segment.

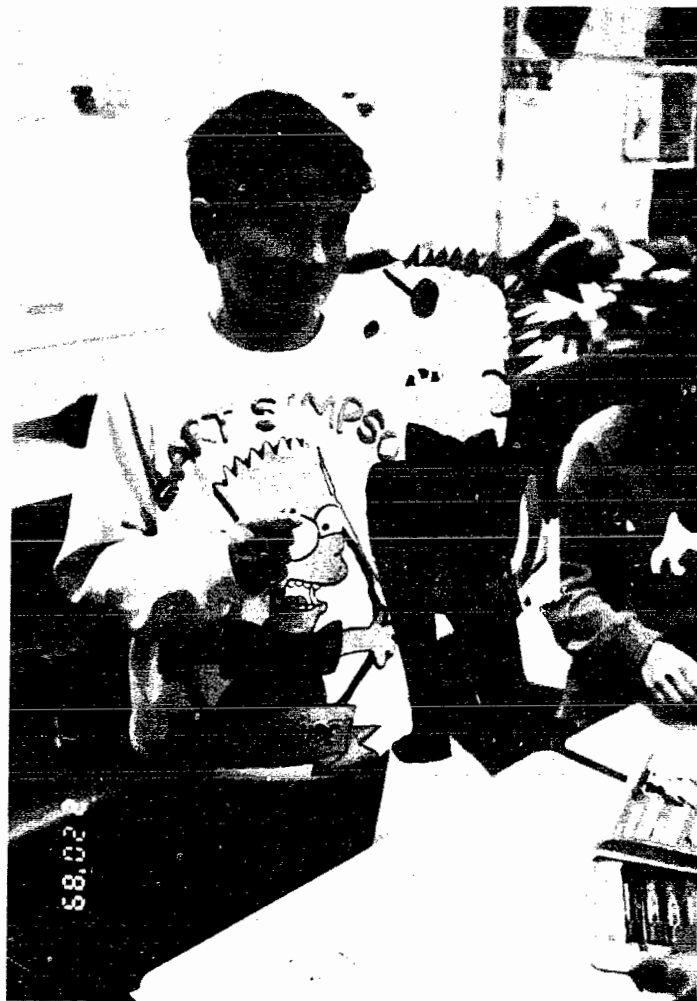


FIGURE 44



FIGURE 45

Members of the procession are chosen by the children. Property men can mime their own actions. Imaginative ideas for a dream sequence are created by the children themselves. As this is a Chinese play and the life-size Bunraku rod puppets are Japanese, the oriental costuming proves colourful and ornate, adding to the *tour de force* of the drama.

After the play is provisionally chosen, the class reads it through again to hear how it sounds and to assess the characters. Although it is too long, we all decide it has possibilities. We will have to divide it into three or four playlets so that students can get on and off the stage easily.

The Wizard knows the biggest problem in the presentation of the end-of-term production is minimizing the time between the playlets. She suggests that one way of shortening the "dead-time" between each part is to enlist the support of the music teacher to play short selections on a piano to fit the time needed. This problem and the technical element of sound does not really interest the children at this stage -- they first want to choose a character and start making it. The Wizard decides to let the children solve these other problems as the play progresses.

Designing Japanese Bunraku Rod Puppets

One bright sunny morning the Wizard is seen staggering along the hallways with cumbersome pieces of corrugated cardboard. She asks students to help carry the rest round the back of the school.

As the children look curiously at the gigantic pieces of cardboard the Wizard starts to tell them that this is what they are going to shape into moving bodies. Wizard tells the children about Japanese puppets called *bunraku*, which require three children to design and perform with one life-size puppet. She points out that it is a *difficult* form of puppetry -- "perhaps even too sophisticated for us to pursue."

(Their eyes light up as if to say No -- it can't be that hard!) Teacher-Wizard tells them that more than any other form of puppetry bunraku appeals to people in North America. "As we work with these puppets we may discover the mysterious fascination."

Wizard puts on black gloves and a black hood so as to appear invisible and performs a short sequence using a large bottle puppet. The children are intrigued and cannot wait to put on the hoods and be invisible too!

She continues with the lesson by drawing body parts on the blackboard to show where each limb will be jointed for movement. She explains how to draw around each other's bodies on the thick cardboard with chalk. Then she sketches how to make the legs into two parts and the arms into three parts. It looks like a giant jointed cardboard cut-out doll.

The children have decided on their groups so they start to trace a body onto the cardboard (Figures 46 and 47).

Tyler says "Can I make a bungee jumper for the procession?" (Figure 48). Wizard says "Why not?" (It's their play after all). "Even if there were no bungee jumpers in Old China they did exist in the Amazon forest where young men dangled from forest vines as a way of proving their manhood."

Michael and Stefan spend much time discussing their dove design while drawing sketches on the blackboard (Figures 49 and 50). They think the wings should be outspread and jointed at the wing base.



FIGURE 46

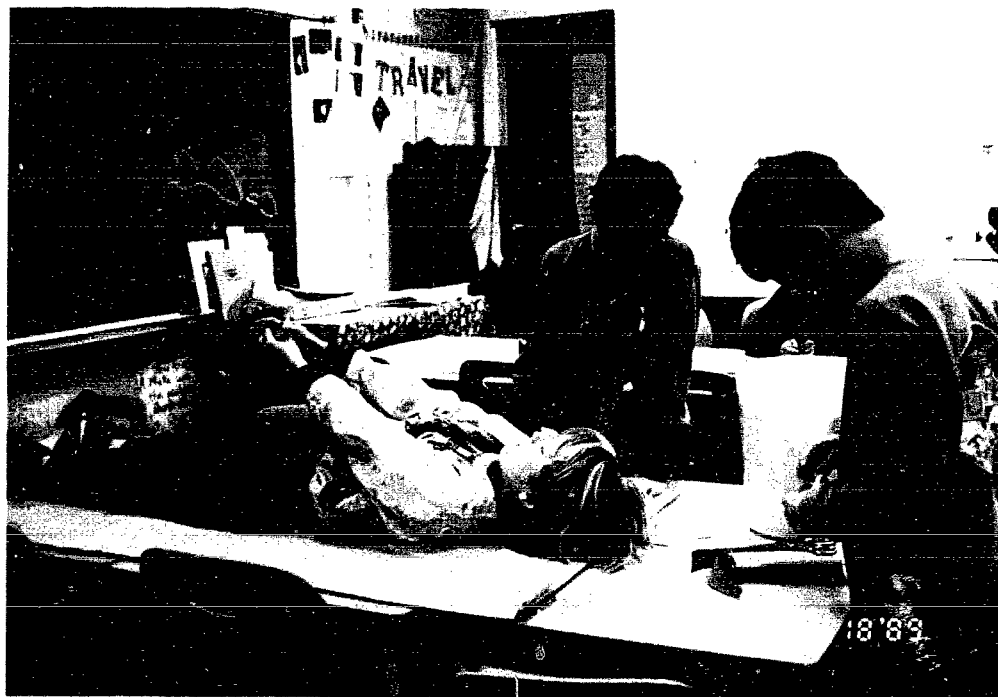


FIGURE 47

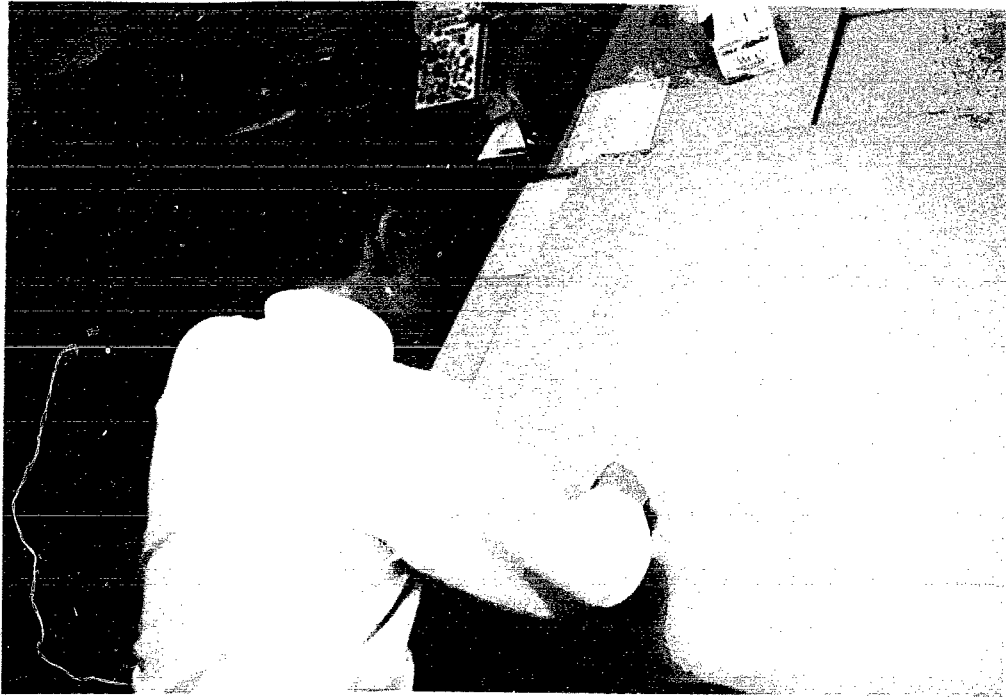


FIGURE 48

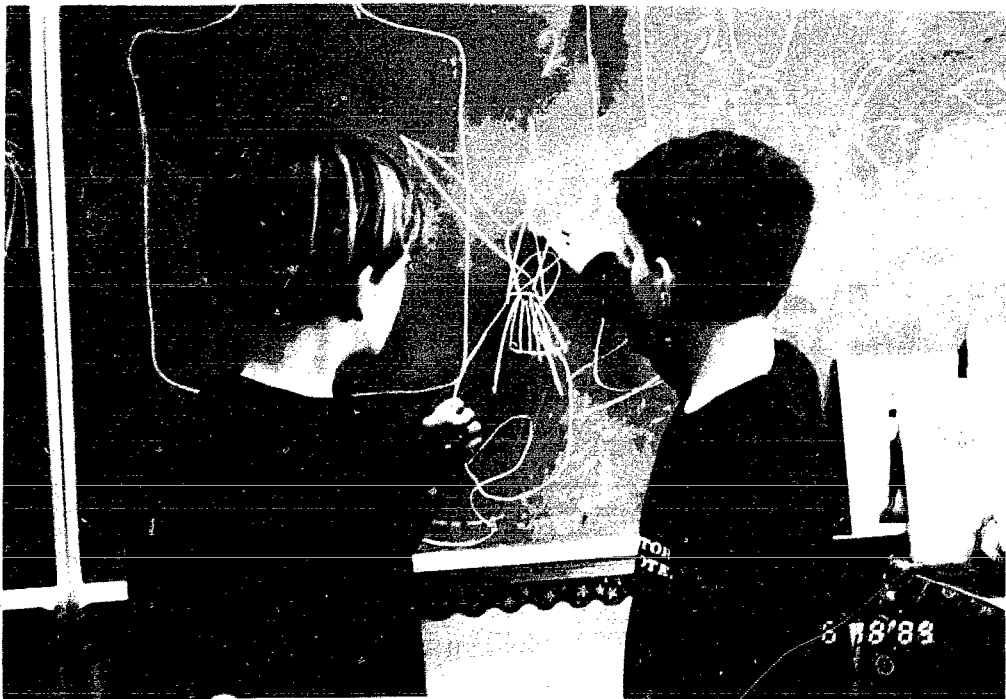


FIGURE 49

Because of the thickness of the card, the body parts are cut out with sharp blades by adults. On some puppets, heads are cut off by mistake and torsos are too short. To be comfortable to operate, the puppets need to reach the children's shoulders. Heads are reglued to torsoes with patches. Both sides of the arms and legs are painted a flesh colour, which always turns out to be too pink! (The children want to add orange to make the skin colour darker "like Chinese people".)

Connecting the body parts proves a major problem. A battery operated drill makes perfect holes if someone holds the cardboard (Figure 51). Joining the parts with string does not work at all well. Jed suggests using the large brads that they have used previously in making shadow puppets would solve this major problem (Figures 52 and 53).

Once the puppet's limbs are connected to the body it is time to dress them. Wizard has been collecting kimonos all week so that puppet pyjamas and loose fitting shirts can be experimented with to get the full effect. Dressing the puppets proves to be very tricky. It requires a cooperative effort from the trio to push the fabric over the cardboard hands and feet (Figure 54).

As the children try to operate the rod puppets, the arms and legs keep falling off. This requires extreme patience. Kelly is getting frustrated. (Figures 55 and 56). Jed says, "the brads have to be bent back like this with strong tape at the back."

Wizard is worried that the cardboard is too thick to operate the doves. Yet another problem. Wizard has never made these puppets before. She doesn't know how to help four of the children creating the doves. She can sense the children struggling to find their own solutions. Sheldon has already brought in a roll of bandage tape on his own initiative to give extra strength to the joints.

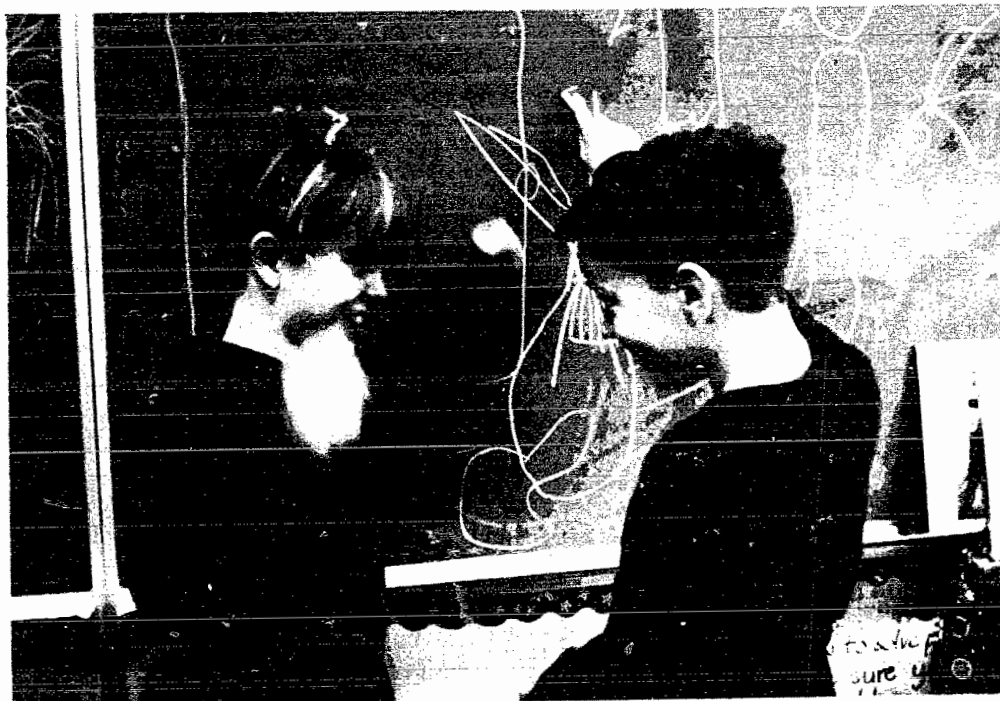


FIGURE 50



FIGURE 51



FIGURE 52



FIGURE 53



FIGURE 54

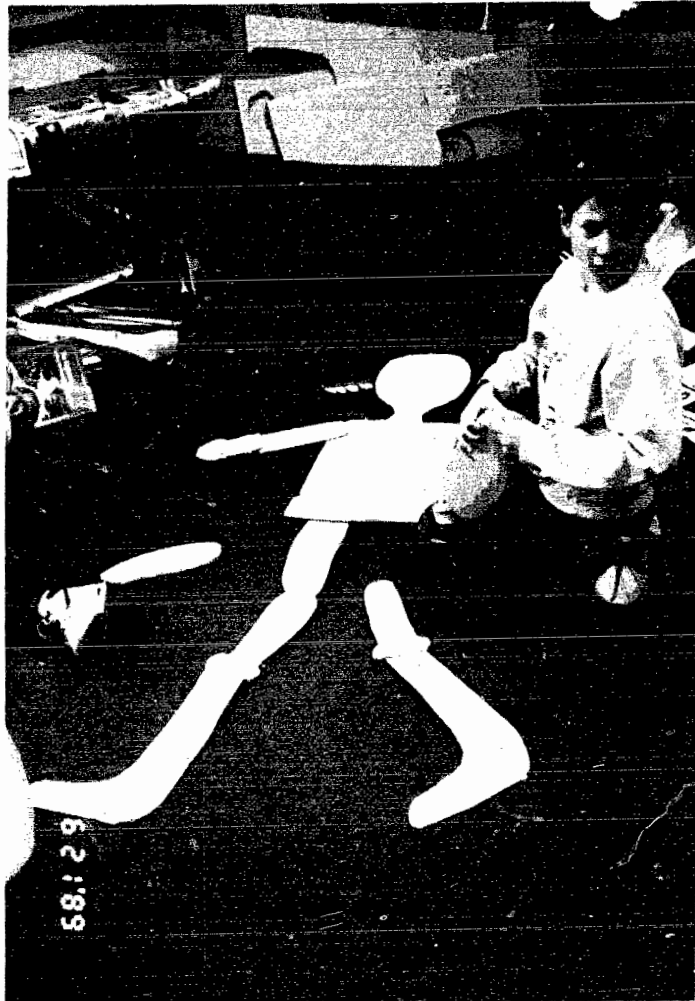


FIGURE 55



FIGURE 56

As the puppets are dressed for the second time, it is decided that we need to study Chinese faces and costume. After looking at a set of Chinese figures in a costume book Amy points to a sample of her puppet's face (Figure 58). Wizard says she will buy glass eyes so that they will attract the light and shine like real eyes. She gives the children black wigs and wool to experiment with hair and moustaches.

As the puppets are used to practice scenes from the play the children in the procession decide that kimonos restrict the movements of bungee jumpers, acrobats, fire eaters and wrestlers. They think their puppets need spandex tights! Wizard asks them "Are you sure?"

The children decide that spandex tights just won't fit the acrobat and bungee jumper (Figures 57 and 59).

As acrobat, weight-lifter and bungee jumper outfits are painted on, another problem looms up. "Wing-Woo says too much and he is too tiring to hold throughout the play," says David. "Help" says the Wizard. She phones a friend to come in and watch the play to help the children solve what seem insurmountable difficulties. Another colleague makes wonderful, sensible suggestions. He says, "Wing-Woo should be a person and not a puppet -- that way he can help mime Pear Blossom's actions and can help to make her movements clearer -- rod puppets can only perform certain actions. It is difficult for rod puppets to show washing, dusting, cooking, etc." (Figure 60)

Everyone likes this idea. Wing-Woo's puppeteers wonder what to do with their puppet now. David suggests making it into a weight lifter for the procession.



FIGURE 57



FIGURE 58



FIGURE 59



FIGURE 60

In the dream sequence of the play, Wizard decides to integrate shadow puppets because of their surrealistic effect and the feasibility of having the dream animated by moving silhouettes. This gives the children who play minor characters more of an opportunity to participate.

The children brainstorm the kinds of dream that Pear Blossom might have. This scene in the play gives opportunities for the class to include their own imaginative ideas. These range from serpents and snakes, feelings of revenge towards the stepsister and mother, a circus procession with humorous performers, and giant birds carrying Pear Blossom to the procession.

Wizard explains, "In Japanese and Chinese cultures, birds are wishes. In Japan a crane is a symbol of good luck when it is set free. If you have a wish in your dream the wish transfers to the birds and is fulfilled. A wish is like a bird set free. Pear Blossom wants to be set free from her life of drudgery. Let's make a cage and demonstrate birds being set free."

Jed likes the idea of Chinese scenery with stunted trees and in the scene he wants an ogre. Wizard agrees but suggests a crow could be the threatening, menacing character in her dream. This may be more symbolic of the irritating stepmother and stepsister. Jed agrees, so the forces of good and evil are forcefully illustrated by doves in their flight for freedom harassed and antagonized by a tattered, hump-backed crow.

Stefan and Michael design a cage and two birds from black paper. These flat, cut-out figures are designed to cast a shadow on the screen. The puppeteers sit on one side of the screen and move the puppets in front of the screen, which is lit from behind. On the other side, the audience sees only the shadows.

Jed agrees to redesign the shadow puppet birds so that they are flying.

Wizard's colleague suggests that the four property men can hold four poles to represent cage bars and in a simple movement unlock the cage to free the birds. Then the children as actors can fly out from behind the theatre and bring the shadow puppet doves to life. This is a beautifully imaginative idea. The doves want to dress in white and have another child dressed in black as the crow taunting the freed birds.

Now comes the opportunity to select a piece of dreamlike music for these movements by puppets and actors, to show the dream coming alive with dancers as doves. Six children volunteer and think of different words for their birds' movements. They choose soaring (pathways), turning (direction), flying (rhythm-pattern), playing (energy-quick), fast, diving (levels) and gliding (smooth).

Teacher-Wizard experiments with Kitaro's New-Age music, but it is far too modern. Kelly and Stefan want rock music for their procession act. It is at this stage of the process that the music teacher is asked for advice. He suggests percussion instruments, so that a few children can be the musicians and interpret the words and movements with sound as the play unfolds.

The music teacher instructs four children as musicians and explains that the sounds will be called "Earth", "Wind", and "Fire." He guides the children to match sounds with words and movements. The Wind is a smooth instrument, the Fire is a twinkly type of sound and the Earth is a deep sound."

When the stepsister and stepmother speak, a musician interprets their words by playing the irritating "fire" sound; when the cow plods onto the stage an earth sound is made with bells; when the birds are pecking the rice, another earth sound is made with wooden blocks.

At this stage, the children are asked to reflect in their journals how they feel about some of the production problems and whether they wish to present the play to the school.

Here are examples of some of their comments.

"I want to do this play because we put a lot of work into the puppets. And I like the puppets a lot. I think they look good. And I like performing and I don't get scared. I think its fun to perform."

"I want to put the play on because I want to do special effects with Stefan. It's fun."

"I would like to show the school our play because it will give us a chance to perform."

"I like to perform The Chinese Cinderella in front of the school but I think we should practice. The doves only have twelve beats. they are flying too long."

"I think it's a good idea performing it to the school. I think the musical instruments are a good idea. I like all the madness in the play, when the step-sister and step-mother get mad at Pear Blossom."

"I want to perform because I like getting up on the stage and speaking."

"I think it is a good idea to put the play on for the school because they would probably be surprized that it was Chinese."

"I think we should do it because its fun."

"I think the play is going just great, and I think that everybody has learned something."

Characterization

To understand their characters and to speak with more genuine emotion the children write the following:

What do I do	How I feel
<p>1. Character: Step sister (Figure 61)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> prettying herself nagging at Pear Blossom act like she's the best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> glamorous like a boss jealous
<p>2. Character: Pear Blossom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> does lots of chores gets yelled at, bossed around rewards for chores rewarded by nature called names overworked, no free time bumps into Lin Yun finds a boyfriend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> miserable physically abused blackmailed happy and excited teased overwhelmed embarrassed very happy
<p>3. Character: Stepmother</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> boss people around blackmail people give chores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> happy about myself pretty proud of my daughter



FIGURE 61

What do I do	How I feel
4. Character: Lin Yun bumps into Pear Blossom marries Pear blossom	embarrassed proud, excited, happy

Voice Projection

Here are samples of children's comments:

"Open your mouth when you are speaking. Don't talk into your puppet's head. Make your voice louder. Put movement into your puppet. Say the words more clearly. Learn your lines off by heart and have fun."

"You have to pronounce the words a lot, if you don't the audience will hear mumbling. Your voice has to be loud and heavy."

"I learned that I didn't have to use a different voice because it ruins your lines."

"Turn your head to a wall and try to make the sound bounce back. You should also say the line like you mean it. Say the line with expression. And very loud. Make sure you move the puppet when you talk."

Sequencing

In the last rehearsing sessions sequencing is practiced, where one group is ready in the wings to go on as soon as the group on stage has finished. Property men use word cues to bring on props.

Good movements and voices are worked out. Characters are refined.

This is it. They are part of Puppet Theatre.

"Remember to freeze if the audience laughs at any line or action, and then continue," reminds the Wizard.

Good luck.

Analysis

American performers describe bunraku puppetry as puppetry with visible manipulators. Devotees of bunraku explain that this form of theatre moves them more powerfully than the other great traditional theatres. "By focusing the full energy of five different performers in a single character, bunraku in fact creates 'super characters' which burn more intensely in the imaginations of the spectators than can characters created by a single live actor" (Speaight, 1991, p. 46).

Although this form of puppetry seems too complex and children are hardly ever seen in bunraku audiences, there was a challenge to try this rod puppet because of its movements. Also I wanted the children to delve a little deeper into another culture and experience a type of puppetry that is flourishing in a country that has enjoyed one of the world's richest traditions of folk puppetry.

The children were faced with many design and performance problems and unconsciously were dealing with the limitations of this particular type of puppet. At the same time as acrobats turned cartwheels and bungee jumpers fell from desk tops, they were also discovering their possibilities. Both the negative and the positive approach is essential. These puppets are not able to do much carrying, as children realized when props were introduced, whereas glove puppets can spend their entire performing time picking up and putting down.

The children understand that the puppet who is supposed to be speaking should be in movement -- even the tiniest head and arm movement will tie the voice to the puppet, if the other puppets freeze. "Imaginative movement is even more important than imaginative making and the magic that happens when the audiences' imagination joins that of the performers is elusive" (Binyon, 1966, p. 106).

By setting a full length mirror in the classroom, the children could play with their puppets, "this is when discoveries can be made and new fresh ideas about movement be born" (Binyon, 1966, p. 107).

The students who wanted to be main characters were forced to deal with the limitations of these life-sized figures. Rehearsing puppets is always difficult because it is very tiring for puppeteers, who cannot hold on too long without a break. Wizard asked the children, "Do you need straps or sticks to help operate the puppets -- has anyone any suggestions?".

To develop ownership students have made choices and decisions from the beginning of the year. The Wizard listens to the problems as the rehearsing progresses and continually asks for suggestions. For example, in the dialogue response journals, several of the children explain that it is too tiring to hold a puppet for the length of time expected and could the play be shortened. The two boys doing the narration were certainly glad that they could perform their part as human actors instead of using a puppet as the narrator.

By solving this problem the children could see that human and puppet actors combined can be an effective and simple way not just to free themselves from prolonged holding of the puppets, but also as a way of miming other puppets' movements to bring them alive.

This mixing of human and puppet actors is a break with tradition currently happening in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Rumania .

While exploring and developing the power of the imagination, interpreting curriculum is still constant in the Teacher-Wizard's thoughts. The end-of-term production is a culmination of the integration of art, language arts, drama, music, movement and rhythm. Line, shape, colour and movement are the key *art* elements as the puppets are created.



FIGURE 62

Art is seeing and really looking. As the children drew out the parts of the human figure they were considering the shape and size of each body part compared to their own bodies. Costume design was considered either by using fabric or paint and referring to historical costume books.

More importantly, they were involved in an art project that gave them some insight into Chinese culture and Japanese culture. Although the form of puppetry is Japanese, the students were mainly concerned with Chinese costume, facial features, hair style, customs and even the way Chinese people sometimes walk in a shuffle.

The play gave other opportunities for imagination and use of art and creative dance skills. The children were faced with the problem of how to bring alive a dream. They imagined the kind of dream Pear Blossom might have had and wrote their ideas down in their dialogue journals. The Wizard suggested choosing one of the simpler ideas that could be depicted with a shadow puppet sequence followed by a creative dance sequence. After much discussion it is decided that as Pear Blossom is dreaming of being freed from her life of drudgery, that this could be shown effectively with shadow puppets and children moving as birds. So shadow puppet birds and a cage are designed. As the birds are shown on the screen being freed from the cage, the four mime students hold a pole, which represents a pole of the cage and they all turn holding the poles to signify the cage being opened. This acts as a signal for the puppets to change into dancers. The children dance out from behind the shadow puppet screen, thus transforming shadow puppets into six human dancers.

The children choreograph their own creative dance based on the idea of birds flocking. (This is a skill they have already learned in their creative dance lessons.) This mixing of human and puppet actors is ideal for younger puppeteers

because it helps them make the movements more expressive and helps hold the audience's attention. It also gives students further opportunities to add original ideas to an existing script and include more students in the final performance.

By learning to interpret words and movements with different percussion sounds they learned more about sound, rhythm, and music. A sound quality seemed better to reflect some of the procession characters than the traditional use of words. We even considered having other characters "speak" in terms of a musical sound rather than through the vehicle of common everyday language.

In this production the language arts were reinforced. Several different scripts were read by the class. And the final script chosen had to be read several times. They had to memorize their parts. Considering that several children *read* their parts with great difficulty, it was amazing to find out that they had actually achieved the hard part of memorizing lines. When teacher-Wizard asked Sheldon, "How did you manage to memorize your part?", he said, "You might wonder how I learned the lines. I sat down with my mum and I practised and practised until I knew them perfectly. And the hard thing was I had trouble *reading* them."

Although in this project they were not involved in impromptu skits, they were still learning new vocabulary and sentence structured narrative-development.

As the students use their own ideas to invent Cinderella's dream one boy desires good and bad shadow characters. Children at the primary ages, between four and eight, tend to identify with powerful abstract binary opposites like good-bad, hot-cold and the mediation between the two. Kieran Egan explains that children tend to identify with these concepts presented in narrative form. He suggests if giving an account of historical facts, teachers could identify "the underlying abstract ideas, which best capture the incidents in a way to make it

readily accessible to kids' imagination" (Egan, 1991, p. 9). In other words they will understand it better and they actually become interested in it.

In fairy tales like Cinderella, children are engaged imaginatively by the narrative format, which in this case deals with the binary opposites of kindness and jealousy. Although this play was not a role drama like Dorothy Heathcote's (1985) model, the story contains universal ideas.

Heathcote calls the code of linking the experience of a person with all others who have similar experiences the *Brotherhoods Code*. Cinderella is in the brotherhood of all those who

- cannot defend themselves
- fear those with power over them (stepmother and stepsister)
- know what it is to have no friends
- have an uncertain future
- have few comforts
- fear other people
- want a boyfriend
- suffer loneliness
- engage in sibling rivalry
- have to meet a deadline
- have been tracked down
- receive a wish they asked for
- have been abused physically and emotionally
- do not have control of their own destiny.

Heathcote uses this code like an objective and for prodding reflection. The children are never asked to identify the universal. However, in this project, to understand how their characters felt, and to identify their characters' feelings so

that they could speak with more emotion, the children did write down some universal ideas.

Puppetry is a theatre art form and the children were dealing with one of the great problems of puppetry: the question of speech and speaking parts for puppets. The words of Wing-Woo and the other puppeteers are necessary for any kind of dramatic content. But it is difficult to make a human voice "belong" to a man-made puppet. All of the old puppet masters altered their voices by putting a kind of whistle in their mouth to make a special voice.

The puppets must convey a meaning by their voices allied to the movements and gestures. They do not have the range of facial expressions employed by actors. The children practised in small groups to develop more expression in their voices. Some children abandoned their squeaky or evil sounding puppet voices because they found that they were closing their throats and so their voices could not be heard. They then learned how to use their own voice to speak their words with more emotion as actors do.

Yet the hardest problem for them all was finding the greatest possible range of expressive movement, how to make little gestures as well as big ones (Figure 62). They practised working together to get a scheme of gestures worked out for each role. This way they solved the problem of how to keep the audience alert, with striking gestures for the dramatically significant movements in the play. They also had to consider where stillness would be as important as movement.

As puppetry is a multi-faceted art form, children can make many of their own choices, and can develop their sense of ownership. This production provided an opportunity for children to choose what they felt comfortable doing. Some children chose non-speaking parts.

The Teacher-Wizard lets them assume responsibility gradually and takes the role that has the children invite advice or assistance. Involvement is invited with phrases like ...

Would you like to ...?

Can we all agree that ...?

Figures 63 and 64 show how the puppeteers, wearing the Kuroko's black costume and hood, looked from the audience's point of view. Once the children had practiced learning to speak slowly and clearly through the black hoods and through the side of the puppet's neck, the audience could hear. But more importantly, the children learned to project their voices clearly with more emotion. Latshaw (1990) said that "bunraku is the pinnacle of the art" because of their emotional intensity (p. 9). He suggests that "visible emotion on the stage can move us and transcend the need for language to explain it" (p. 9).



FIGURE 63



FIGURE 64

Conclusion

After the children had performed The Chinese Cinderella with bunraku puppets, the Wizard asks them to reflect on the experience by writing a letter to a friend. To assess the success from the children's point of view and the educational benefits of this end-of-term production, Wizard poses the question "How do you feel about being on stage putting on a puppet play after so much hard work? The children replied with the following comments:

Julia: "One of the reasons that I liked doing the play was that I had some really good partners."

Courtney: "It was really embarrassing, but it was still good. I really enjoyed it."

Krista: "I was the main part. I was really nervous on stage but I had Myra beside me."

Brandon: "When I was a dove dancing it was neat."

Aaron: "It was kind of hard going up on stage at first but as soon as you have been up on stage a few times you will get used to it."

Jed: "I felt strange with the spotlight on me but I enjoyed it. It was fun."

Bonny: "I liked the part where Pear Blossom bumps into Lin Yun and the whole audience just laughed and laughed."

Ben: "Playing an instrument was fun. We had DRY-ICE. It was neat. I wish you could see it."

Amy: "I had fun being an actress."

Scott: "It was hard being a musician because you always had to be ready."

David: "I felt a little nervous with people watching on all sides but I gained confidence in myself."

Jordan: "We did it for all the parents and that was the funnest part."

Krista: "I did not think it would be as good as it was."

Ian: "It was kind of fun being a musician and a puppeteer. You always have to be on task. It is quite fun."

Kristen: "I was a little embarrassed at first but it was a lot of fun. I enjoyed being the stepsister. I wish you could come and watch me."

Jennifer: "I was a little embarrassed at first but then I got used to it. It was fun. I liked it a lot."

Stefan: "I was controlling one of the spotlights. I was also a property man. It felt fine to be on stage."

Stephanie: "I had to speak really loud because there was about one hundred people there. I was so nervous I was sweating."

The comments indicate that the work continues to be enjoyable and challenging partly because of the additional theatre experiences. For example, spotlights, special effects, bunraku black costumes, music accompaniment, a larger audience, and the challenge of manipulating bunraku puppets whilst speaking loudly with emotion. The comments also show that the children continue to gain comfort from working with friends on something new. Some of the children felt more embarrassed than others, but they have all progressed at different rates along the continuum from self-consciousness, anxiety and inhibition to communication, fun, confidence, creativity and imagination. The play did prove to be as rewarding and significant an experience as I had hoped because of the educational, social and aesthetic benefits. The end result was worthy of the process.

CHAPTER 4

Conclusions and Recommendations

First, I will answer the main question in the study in conjunction with the questions about imagination that guided the study. Second, I will make conclusions by addressing my goals. Third, I will describe the activities in Figures 65 - 70 and use them to illustrate certain concluding points about the study. Finally, educational implications will be drawn.

According to Barrow (1990) imaginative teaching will include those activities intentionally undertaken by the teacher that involve novel, unusual, sometimes unique and original yet appropriate and effective ideas (cited in Richmond, 1990, p. 2). However, some of the activities in this study were more successful than others and consequently some of the objectives were not met as well as was expected.

Questions That Guided the Study

First, I will explain the ways puppets encouraged the children to work imaginatively and creatively in an integrated arts experience, which was the major objective of the study. Then I will make practical suggestions for other activities with puppets that I think would challenge children's imaginations further and may prove to be a more imaginative teaching approach that would involve more novel, unusual, appropriate and effective ideas.

The puppeteer opens the window of imagination and lets the audience look out. Puppetry leads to creativity and use of imagination in many ways.

Children used the puppets to release their unique creativity in the areas of art, storytelling, language, and sound. Almost every stage of this study called for the use of creative imagination. Some examples include:

- creating puppets out of commonplace objects
- sculpting with paper mâché
- designing costumes
- inventing conversation
- making up punch lines
- painting scenery
- constructing props
- thinking up clever sound effects
- creating puppet gestures
- injecting humour (puppets love to hear children laugh!)

Making a unique, original creation from an everyday object pushed the children to think imaginatively and to look at things in new ways. By playing with materials and ideas, the mind created new possibilities. For example, children used their imaginations to think of how an odd shape could provoke a fascinating character. A sleeve off an old sweater could be brought to life with finger movements or a pair of black gloves manipulated with both hands. Thumbs together could become a believable spider (Scenario 1).

As the children's spontaneous and original ideas were accepted in a non-critical atmosphere, they become empowered. In releasing their imaginations in puppetry to create in their own way, there was no external pressure to do what was expected of them. Each new empowerment unleashed more imaginative force to the new puppetry activities as they were introduced (Scenario 1, 2 and 3).

Puppets encouraged children to work imaginatively while they were being taught *artistic* discipline, which encouraged *self-discipline* in the children. As a result they saw how self-discipline brings enjoyment to learning other subjects and

they seemed more responsive when asked to use their imaginative powers in all aspects of learning.

Puppets encouraged the children to work imaginatively in the language arts field. They helped develop communication skills. One of the best ways to encourage imaginative language was to allow the children to improvise. As the children improvised they invented conversation. Here, puppetry brought something (perhaps a wonderful perception of words) out of the deeper recesses of the children's imagination. The puppets were able to release aspects of the children's thoughts.

As performers they were freed to think and act "with the puppet" compared to adhering to a formal script or becoming self-conscious when acting as themselves. Given this freedom, the children became wonderful natural creators of stories (Scenario 2).

Puppetry enlarged the children's vocabulary by providing a situation for using words that they already knew in a more confident way. It sharpened the edges of words they already used. For example, if a puppet knocked on a door and said weakly, "Let me in!" and there was no response, the children were finally moved to say, "Open the portcullis in the name of the King!"

In the process of sharpening words they already knew, puppetry introduced new words and ways of using them. For example, while involved in a unit on the Middle Ages, the students learned much new vocabulary. Using puppets with newly learned vocabulary helped to build confidence and developed fluency in the speakers. The puppeteers discovered that they could try out different voices, invent a wide range of dialects and adapt what they said to fit the needs of the audience. At the same time they were learning the art of rhetoric (Scenario 2 and 3).

In Scenario 3, the puppets encouraged the children to write imaginatively because the puppets motivated dialogue, which was later written down as a play. The children invented dialogue as the puppets took shape. The puppets gave children opportunities to tell a story using their creative flare and imagination.

I will now consider the further questions that guided my study. The concept of imagination in puppetry is significant as a process and a product. In the improvisational skits, the process not the product creates the learning experience. When puppetry was first introduced the children experimented and made discoveries about the different types of puppets and the ways they move. Again the process is more important at this stage. As the children spent more time on a more exotic-looking puppet, for example, the glove puppet, they obviously wanted to make this puppet work in the same way as the professional puppeteer they watched. In other words they move into the art of theatre, where they become concerned about production.

In puppetry, the process *and* the product are imaginative. After this study I conclude that there should be *more* of an emphasis on the process because you want to develop imagination, concentration, cooperation, speaking and listening. If there is too much emphasis on the product the skills acquired thereby are in discipline and interpretation.

In an art form that is more process-orientated, the children have more opportunities to produce inventive, effective and vitally different ideas. They also learn to think of new ways of looking and thinking as they are engaged in art, writing, and performing activities.

My observation about students' reactions to the demands and rewards of working with particular art form is that they probably enjoyed the art aspects of puppetry the most because it is colourful and exciting. I think they found the writing

and performing much more difficult. Also by working on an end-of-term production they had to wait for "show time" to determine whether or not they had been successful.

Conclusions by Addressing the Goals

Now I will explain the extent to which the goals were achieved. Using puppets provided motivation in art, language arts and drama. The students' desire to use humour in the improvisational skits, plays and play writing has potential in that it could be the gateway to further imaginative writing. Making and/or using puppets allowed children to express their humour and individuality. A well-presented puppet show helped the children to feel successful where they may not have been successful in some of their other school subjects. Puppetry gave a change of pace from routine studies, and students welcomed the change. Etter (1967) says, "they are still learning many subjects as they present various types of shows, but they work harder because of the novel presentation and fun they get from such work" (p. 33).

The students gained knowledge and understanding from creating and performing with puppets. They became experts in puppetry by being involved and developed artistic ability by practicing the art. Some students learned faster than others. They carried out the tasks to the best of their abilities. In keeping with this idea James Gribble (1969) remarks, "For what we mean by developing creative or imaginative ability is getting them to perform these varied tasks as well as they are able" (cited in Ryle, 1979, p. 33).

Students gained aesthetic satisfaction from creating attractive scenery and puppets, and from discovering good literature in the stories used. They enjoyed the designing, performing and critiquing (as audience members). The art of

making puppets is an imaginative enterprise. There is satisfaction in the coherence of a puppet's form because it fits its role perfectly. When the children were able to present puppet shows complete with all the theatrical effects, this fostered the aesthetic appreciation of theatre as an art form.

The students learned to cooperate in the social interaction needed for construction and use of puppets. Students who felt insecure in the group gained security when their shows were accepted by the class.

Using puppets made learning a positive and enjoyable experience. They enjoyed the art of puppetry because it is different and enjoyable in many ways.

Students who have been shy and retiring have overcome some of their timidity in presenting puppet shows. They progressed on a continuum from inhibition and self-consciousness to creativity, imagination, communication, sense of fun, self-confidence and self-discipline. This is evidenced by some of the children's comments made throughout the study.

Puppetry provided fun. Creating, designing and performing are exciting. Perhaps it is also fun for children to speak through the innocence of the simple fool. Nanda Carrant (1985) says, "the fool helps reinstate the joy of being" (p. 57).

The activities suggested in Figures 65-70 would provide fun because they would enable the students to work fast and play with all sorts of combinations. They would not need to carve or mould anything, but they could glue, cut out and put together a puppet, which they could improvise with, instead of using scripts. Exciting, free associations would happen with these types of activities. They would be challenged to produce unusual extraordinary and even abstract types of puppets, instead of a typical paper mâché glove puppet. The students would experience the alchemy of materials -- how they can select one thing, combine it with another, and get a splendid result.

At the beginning of the study the teaching was less structured and there was a more freeing climate of self-expression. The classroom atmosphere was more conducive to open, experimental learning. The students had opportunities to converse and seemed prepared to take more risks. They appeared more energetic, getting excited about putting their ideas into action. They were also able to work on their own or in small groups, which they had the power to organize in their own way. Towards the end of the study the students were not working freely in groups. As the end-of-term play was rehearsed many times, the fun aspect was dimmed.

The students were challenged by their engagement in this expressive art form particularly in Scenario Four. They had to make a disciplined commitment to designing, creating, and performing. In the bunraku play, called *The Chinese Cinderella*, the students pushed themselves to produce good results. There were times when the work of performing with these puppets became difficult because bringing these puppets to life meant putting intense emotion into the voices. Memorizing lines and constant rehearsing became tedious for some of the students. Learning to project their voices with emotion was a difficult challenge. However, I could be wrong about this assumption because when asked for their reactions to the demands and rewards of working with this particular art form most of them made positive statements such as:

"I think the play is going just great, and I think that everybody has learned something."

"I want to perform. I like getting up on the stage and speaking."

They learned that "original work, brilliance, even genius, in the arts requires much discipline, control and patience, knowledge and vision" (Ryle, 1979, p. 33).

Students with learning problems responded well to working with puppets in ways they would not necessarily do if working under standard classroom conditions. The main learning problems which were few, consisted of poor self-image, low self-esteem, aggressiveness, short attention span, speech and language impaired, the culturally different child and the shy and withdrawn. It gave me the opportunity to learn more about these children's ideas, feelings and experiences by watching them manipulate the puppets.

Students did become flexible. It is difficult to assess how well they looked at things in new ways. The art of constructing puppets is a way of looking at a new reality. Puppets are extraordinary and yet what they do is ordinary. The puppets are made in such a way that they relate to a child's world.

The major goal was to develop a new way of thinking and this would have been achieved more successfully if more time had been spent on activities that were more simple and fun bearing in mind that the impact of such activities, both within the child and without are important and not the least bit simple. For example, in Figures 65-70, I have described examples of lesson activities, which are simple, fun and would encourage students to go through some powerful potential mind-stretching experiences.

Description of Activities

The lesson activities in Figures 65-70 are the researcher's ideas adapted from a selection of books on puppetry and workshops taken on the subject. They are practical suggestions to explore and develop the power of imagination. They are intended to be used in conjunction with some of the projects already used in the study. The emphasis in these lessons would need to correspond with the specific needs of the individual class.

For example, if students needed vocabulary building, more lessons like those under the titles of "Wise Words" and "Opposite Characters" would be implemented. Also the improvisational skits, which are done in the lessons under the titles of "Intriguing Hands," "Shadow Profiles" and "Mad Molecules" could be transformed into writing lessons; hence the stories could be written on a more formal level and then reenacted again.

They would also be teaching concepts such as:

- enhancing sensory awareness through active involvement with touch, sight and sound activities (Figure 65).
- strengthening the ability to improvise or "think on one's feet."
(Helping to promote rapid thought and action response through spontaneous interaction such as puppet and child, art and child, child and child, etc.) (Figure 66)
- developing body rhythms and coordination through movement (Figure 67)
- exploring characterization through exaggeration -- verbal and/or physical. (Providing experiences so that abstract ideas and concepts may be clearly understood) (Figures 68-69)
- practicing teamwork. (Fostering techniques of group thinking, collaboration and brainstorming, on the one hand, and individual thought processes on the other) (Figure 70).

From the researcher's point of view these activities are more suitable for several reasons. First, if imagination is to be education's first concern, then the activities should have specific concepts but be less structured so that imagination is explored and developed. The activities become more like a mind stretching experience. Second, the concepts should be clearly thought out so that the

product is effective and valuable learning has taken place. Third, students will gain expertise and knowledge of puppetry from these activities as an art form in its own right without the projects being too difficult for the age group. We need to have high expectations and challenge students in the arts, but the activities should be within the students capabilities.

Fourth, if students are to progress further on the continuum from inhibition and self-consciousness to creativity, imagination, communication, sense of fun, self-confidence and self-discipline, more activities like the examples in Figures 65-70, are more likely to achieve this.

Finally, many of the activities in this study followed a formal approach to puppetry with set lines, plays, imposed situations in which the best speakers and the best made puppets were chosen by the children. I am suggesting that the activities in Figures 65-70 would enhance the creative approach because they are essentially spontaneous improvisation. The dialogue and action would be original and stimulating. Spontaneous action and reaction necessitates a thinking through of a situation and conflict with resulting decisions. The creative puppetry approach as opposed to the formal one explores and develops the power of imagination.

To Draw Educational Implications

This study aimed specifically at finding out the various ways puppets encourage children to work imaginatively and creatively in an integrated art experience. The students gained expertise, knowledge, skills and appreciation about aspects of puppetry as an art form in its own right. Some students, more than others, may have developed new ways of looking and thinking as they were involved in the activities. Some students may also have developed new

alternatives to problem solving that examined issues from different vantage points and achieved new solutions.

This brings me to the following questions:

- Why is it important to involve children imaginatively in the arts?
- What does this study imply educationally?
- What implications does this study have for the role of the teacher in the arts?

It is important to involve children imaginatively in all subjects as well as in fine arts. Imagination ought to be education's first concern because change in society is rapid and children need an open-mindedness, a flexibility and an ability to synthesize diverse information into novel ways if they are to cope with current social shifts and diversities. In other words, this study implies that schools need to deal with the way in which individuals creative adaptive strategies in response to their environment.

It is recognized by many researchers that developing the ability to be creative is one of the most important goals of the education process and this does not apply just to the public school system. Business Week reports that more than half of the Fortune 500 companies send their managers for creative training, a trend which supports Einstein's statement "Imagination is more important than knowledge." (cited in Frazier & Renfro, 1987, p. 1).

The educational futurists call for a curriculum that is activity and idea-based. They recommend that children be active learners rather than passive receivers. We want to avoid producing compulsive workers and instead engage students' minds so that the interest remains high. Students will also become experts by being involved. Puppetry is a marvellous creative outlet and is one way of

ensuring active involvement and personal growth by students in the school environment.

This study implies that it is important to involve children in an art form such as this because it achieves an important goal in education, that is, to enable students to mature to the point when they can engage sincerely in dialogue. The concrete experience of using puppets and of being involved in an imagined situation is fused with emotion. This gives children an idea of their own power, which in turn stimulates speech and ability to express their emotions.

What emerged quite strongly was the children's capacity to discipline themselves, use patience on challenging tasks and the fact that most of them performed the varied tasks as well as they were able. Self-discipline, long hours of practice, patience, knowledge of the discipline in question are the principles by which work of the highest quality in the arts is to be produced. This implies that a solid basis of teaching and learning is necessary. Some of the students became better than others in some areas of the work -- both in what they produced and the skills they developed. For example, some of the students were able to create puppets which were built in such a way that when manipulated they looked effective. Other students were better at inventing clever and humorous stories. Some students were able to build intricate scenery and props and were able to culminate the activities to produce an effective play. Some students seemed prepared to put in longer hours and worked harder on the tasks. Original work, unique ideas, and brilliance in the arts requires much discipline, patience and knowledge.

I will now discuss the implications this study has for the role of teachers. The role of the teacher in the arts is critical, yet complex. It is critical because I contend the arts are as basic to education as they are to life. In keeping with this idea Kohl

(1978) says, "Experience with art leads to the development of the imagination, to the playful exercise of the mind that leads to the solution of social and technical as well as artistic problems" (p. 39).

The role of the teacher is also complicated by the need to find balance between freedom and authority, structure and unstructure. This is especially true in the teaching of the arts. This study, especially in scenario three and four, showed how difficult it is not to impose rigid structures of ideas and methods upon the children. For example, more time spent on telling stories rather than using scripts would have made the method less rigid. However, the task is not to let anything happen in the name of self-expression. To promote creative and critical thinking, the methods of teaching should allow students to be flexible. The tasks in scenario four were not open-ended enough to allow for personal shaping of the tasks and for individual interpretation.

Although teachers may enjoy the art aspects of creating puppets, because of the need to supervise a large number of children they may be reluctant to give children the freedom to explore with their puppets. Also teachers may think that the children become overly excited and that the level of noise and confusion is too high. The activities in this study, and the activities in the recommendations for further study, imply that this may be a problem for some teachers. However, if student teachers were given a substantial course in puppetry as is the case in countries like Czechoslovakia and Hungary, teachers would gain much expertise in this all-encompassing art form.

Teachers need skills and knowledge about many art forms and must practice to get them right to achieve real satisfaction. Ideally, what is wanted is an approach that motivates and creates a classroom climate conducive to more experimental learning and at the same time achieves a quality product. The

children's commitment and interest will depend upon the quality of their experience in the work in question. Some children will always interpret things in richer ways than others and be able to communicate their ideas more successfully. In keeping with this statement, Ryle (1979) says,

In each of the arts it is the teacher's job to show the pupils the ropes. It is up to the pupils to climb them. And in some cases, teachers must realise that their pupils may be able to climb faster and higher -- sometimes much higher than they can. (p. 33)

The study described was an example of integration but what educational implications does it have for the future of "arts of the imagination" (Sparshott, 1990, p. 2)?

The development of the kind of imagination focussed on in this study is a vitally important goal of the education process. Teachers are creative agents and need to be imaginative and original in their approach to teaching in order to motivate and capture the diverse interests of students. As has been pointed out by Eisner (1985), we need more creative kinds of teaching where ideas stimulate children and also respect their uniqueness. However, to gain expertise in the fine arts, which develop imagination, means that we must redouble our efforts on two levels: teacher training and upgrading in the arts and maximum use of arts teachers already in the system. Trained specialists are needed at all levels. Sufficient funding is required. Teachers currently possessing skills in the arts need to be given release time to act as inspirational leaders in their own school districts. In keeping with this idea Cuthbertson (1990) says, "Discrete learning and skill building in order to develop the tools with which our students can begin to be creative are essential to successful programs" (p. 1).

The Province of British Columbia is now into the second phase of implementation of the Year 2000 curriculum reform. "Proponents of a stronger role

for the arts in the education system have not been encouraged by the reality of the situation -- not much change -- as opposed to the hopes engendered by the document citing the arts as a major "strand" (Cuthbertson, 1991, p. 1).

With potential changes in arts education, enormous possibilities present themselves. We have a chance to acknowledge the importance of the arts in our lives because

Surely the way to teach discrimination, to engender cultural identity, to build future audiences, and to encourage creative problem-solving in the Canada of tomorrow is to involve the very young in the magic that is the arts. (Cuthbertson, 1990, p. 1).

APPENDICES

A. Lesson Activities

B. Puppet Plays

Teacher prepared puppet plays:

1. The Ghost Walks Tonight
2. The Bank Robber
3. Ug!
4. The Ghost with One Black Eye
5. The Chinese Cinderella (Bunraku play).

Student prepared puppet plays:

1. The Postman
2. Raving Red Riding Hood (Alden, 1987)

Plays written by Grade 3 and 4 students in this study:

1. Baby Talk
2. The Bank Robbery
3. The Weirdest Valentine's Day Ever
4. The Capture of the Five Ducks
5. Little Red Riding Hood

Lesson Activities

The following lesson activities (Figures 65-70) have been written similarly to those in the Elementary Fine Arts Curriculum Guide/Resource Book (Province of British Columbia, 1985, pp. 53-65).

A logo has been devised for each of the four content areas (Province of British Columbia, 1985, p. 24):



= developing images;



= elements and principles of design;



= materials and processes;



= responding to art.

I have created the following logos:



= use of imagination;



= brainstorming vocabulary for improvisation;



= performing puppet skits.

Art Lesson:

Theme: Look! Listen!

Title: Marvellous Masterpieces

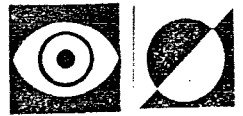
Content Area

Purpose: To enhance sensory awareness with sight, and sound activities.

To create characters and a story line from selected art and music sources.

Materials:

1. 2-D colour reproductions which can be compared and contrasted (e.g., Renaissance scenes, impressionistic, op and pop art, computer art or
2. For musical interpretations find recordings (native American, African tribal music, blues, rock)



Introduction:

Have group members explain what they think the artist is communicating in a particular creation, visual or musical.



Development:

Divide the group into teams of three. Ask each team to choose a picture or musical piece as inspiration for a puppet show. Specific questions may be asked to stimulate the team to imagine a story that might be implied from the source.



Painting example -- Henry Rousseau's The Sleeping Gypsy:

- What is the gypsy doing on the desert?
- Where did he come from? Where is he going?
- What is the relationship of the gypsy and Lion?
- Are they friends or enemies?
- Is there conflict?



Music example -- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro:

Describe the events suggested from the sounds made in this opera music. From the selected art source and story line let specific characters evolve that teams can translate into puppets. Rod, strong, body, shadow or hand puppets are suitable forms to explore.



Conclusion/Evaluation:

- Perform the work.
- Select parts of the images and tell why they are felt to be noteworthy.



FIGURE 65

Art Lesson:

Theme: Think quickly

Title: Wise Words

Content Area

Purpose: To strengthen the ability to improvise or "think on one's feet."

To explore the meanings of some random, difficult-to-grasp verbs and adjectives.

Materials:

Puppet items: Paper plates, medium-size rubber bands, construction paper, fabric and odds and ends.

Introduction:

Build a thought provoking word list on the blackboard with help from the class.

Development:

The Activity: Ask the students to move their bodies across a space to express some of the following words: excessive, pomposity, ferocious, melancholy. Examples of movements are: pompous (rigid movements). Select specific words and have each child create a Paper-Plate Puppet character to conceptualize the word. For example: "Excessive" may be illustrated in the form of a flashy rock star who wears an outrageous costume or hair-do.

"Pomposity" could be reflected by a hand-waving King, strutting along in a superior fashion.

Follow this up with skit presentations. The Rock Star could sing an excessively dramatic song; or the King recite a pompous speech.

Conclusion:

Perform and select parts of the skits and tell why these are felt to be noteworthy.

Extension/Enrichment: Challenge groups of two to invent short skits in which characters meet to enlarge upon the word concepts.

For example:

What effect does the Rock Star's singing have on the King?



FIGURE 66

Art Lesson:

Theme: On the Move

Title: Intriguing Hands

Content Area

Purpose: To develop body rhythms and coordination through movement. To transform hands into believable puppet-like creatures and then recite a poem to express ideas and shapes.

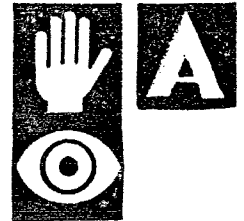
Materials:

"Water-soluble paints and glue, water based felt-tip marker pens, buttons, wool, scrap fabric, construction paper."



Introduction:

Working in groups of three to five children and ask each group to prepare a demonstration of some basic movements hands and fingers can perform without the aid of puppets. Groups can share the results using some of the following words: beckoning, pounding, scooping, counting, rubbing, twiddling, etc.



Development:

The Activity: Invent a hand/finger play with an accompanying story or poem. Explore animals, objects, people and other things that can be created with hands and fingers.



Conclusion:

Students perform original poems.

Extension: Stories or poems written by popular authors can be explored. For example, *Missing Piece* and *A Light in the Attic* by Shel Silverstein. Let students introduce their creations from a makeshift stage, adding props like a toothbrush, giving puppets special personalities while improvising story skits.



FIGURE 67

Art Lesson:

Theme: Create A Character

Title: Opposite Characters

Content Area

Purpose: To explore characterization by focussing on opposite characters.

Materials:

Puppet items: Construction and stiff paper, scrap fabric, wool, trims and odds and ends, chopsticks or cardboard towel tubes.

Introduction:

Build a selection of antonyms or opposite words on the blackboard. Some examples are: happy/sad, ugly/beautiful, night/day, high/low, sane/insane, calm/agitated.

Development:

The Activity: Begin by having a leader perform a pose or movement before the group. The group then responds with an opposite action pose or movement. For example: Loose-jointed walk/stiff, ramrod walk. In groups of two, create Rod-Masks that depict two opposite characteristics. Groups can demonstrate, while wearing the Rod-Masks how opposite characters behave or move. For example: calm/agitated -- smooth and jerky movements.

Rod-Masks can then be integrated into Opposite Character skits. Each group can focus on conflict using interesting dialogue, movement and sound. For example: Ugly and Beautiful discover that these characteristics are only external. how?

Conclusion:

Perform skits to the class.

Select parts which show conflict clearly and discuss.

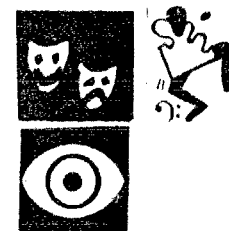


FIGURE 68

Art Lesson:

Theme: Look! Listen!

Title: Marvellous Masterpieces

Content Area

Purpose: To explore characterization through exaggeration.

To make a shadow puppet profile and discuss the character's qualities.

Materials:

Profile pictures of people; for example, Pablo Picasso's The Red Armchair, white shower curtain, spotlights or overhead projector for light source.

Puppet items: thin card, lace, net, wool, show laces, beads, straws, wire or umbrella spokes, permanent marker pens.

Introduction:

Collect a wide variety of pictures depicting profiles of interesting people. Show portraits done by Picasso and Daumier. Study the profiles and discuss the character qualities and why each character is unique.

Development:

The Activity:

Working in groups of two and have students study one another's profiles. Then create a profile drawing of the partner on a sheet of card while exaggerating features such as the nose, chin and eyes. Add distinguishing details to the basic profile to further develop characteristics, such as an exaggerated hairdo, fantastic hat or absurd earrings. Convert the profile drawings into shadow puppets. Cut out eyes, add a body with moveable arms and legs, attach wool or shoe laces to body and hands, use tape hinges and add rods to maneuver, add raffia, feathers, any odds and ends that create an interesting silhouette. Work in pairs and create dialogue to enact using the shadow screen technique.

The dialogue could use any of the following topics:

Two strangers meet; one person is interviewed by another; two people are conducting a performance; two people are doing a job together.

Conclusion:

- Present skits to entire group.
- Select parts of the skits and tell why these are felt to be noteworthy.

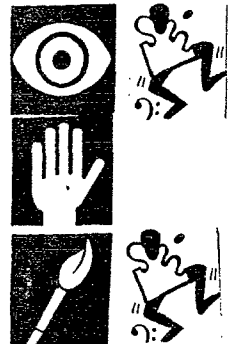


FIGURE 69

Art Lesson:**Theme:** Put It All Together**Title:** Mad Molecules

Content Area

Purpose: To practice teamwork. To foster techniques of group thinking, for example, collaboration and brainstorming. To encourage individual thought processes.

To create puppets made from molecules.

Materials:

Lots of newspaper, string and rods, rubber bands, masking tape, long-nosed hand-grip type stapler.

Introduction:

What are some things that are composed of molecules. For example: the human body (cells), beach (sand), universe (stars), newspaper photograph (dots).

Development:

Divide the group into two teams and have them make molecules from crunched up newspaper. Decide on a common theme, for example, giant insects, giant mythological characters, and model a newspaper ball puppet character. Limbs can be stapled at connecting points. Balls can be linked effectively by typing rubber bands round each ball with another band. When completed, giant puppets can be operated by several group members. When completed help students develop a plot for puppets to perform in a large space. A prop can be introduced to help focus a conflict.

Suggestions:

One giant character possesses a broom. The other giant character would like to possess the broom because he discovers that it contains special magic. What kind of magic does the broom perform? Why does the second character want it? Does he finally obtain the broom? Is it put to good or bad use?

Conclusion:

Perform in a large space.

Select parts and tell why they are felt to be noteworthy.

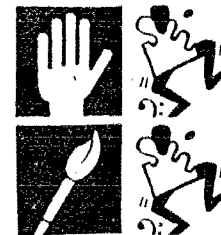


FIGURE 70

1. THE GHOST WALKS TONIGHT

Characters:

Narrator
 Bud
 Henry, his friend
 Peewee, Henry's small sister
 Joe, a burglar
 Brenda, his dull-witted partner

(Joe & Brenda's parts may be switched if desired)

Props:

Sheet for Peewee
 2 Lanterns
 Piece of chain
 Pieces of white paper to be used as fallen plaster
 Peewee's candy bag
 Candy (wrapped)
 Black masks
 Sofa and cushions
 Black bag
 Play money

SCENE 1

NARRATOR: As the play opens we find two boys and a girl standing outside the window of the living room of an abandoned house. Bud and Henry are holding lanterns and examining the room. Peewee wears a sheet and carries a jack-o-lantern. All of the children are trying to get enough courage to enter the room.

HENRY: Gosh, it looks awfully spooky in there.

BUD: So what? that's the way a haunted house is supposed to look, silly. Come on -- I'll go first.

(The boys climb into the room through the window.)

HENRY: L-look at the pile of - of bones!

BUD: They aren't bones, silly. They're just chunks of fallen plaster from that hole in the ceiling. (Enthusiastically says) What a perfectly swell place for a ghost!

PEEWEE: (Loudly) I want to go home!

BUD: Aw, there's nothing to be scared of, Peewee. Just an old, empty house, isn't it Hen?

HENRY: Yeah, I guess so. I wish we weren't going to stay here all night though. After all, it is Hallowe'en.

PEEWEE: (Howling) I want to go home!

HENRY: (In disgust) Why didn't you think of that sooner? I would have been glad to leave you there. But no, you bawled until Mom said we had to take you along.

PEEWEE: (Dejectedly) I thought we were going to everybody's houses to collect candy.

BUD: Shucks - that's just for little kids.

PEEWEE: But I am a little kid!

BUD: What are we going to do with her?

(Reluctantly, Henry takes a bag of candy from his pocket and dumps it into Peewee's bag.)

HENRY: I was saving these for later but I guess we have to shut her up.

PEEWEE: Ooooh, thanks!

HENRY: Now, Peewee, you can take your jack-o-lantern and walk up and down in front of the house, like this. (Moves up and down) The you can warn us if you see anybody coming.

PEEWEE: Who are you expecting?

BUD: Oh, just some old ghosts, goblins and witches.

(At this point, Peewee begins to howl louder than ever)

HENRY: (In disgust) Now, see what you did.

BUD: They're just kids dressed up in costumes, Peewee. And they're going to try and scare us out of here. Hen and I bet them we'd stay all night in this fine old haunted house. If we win we each get a double scoop ice cream cone. And we'll share with you if you'll be good and do what you're told.

PEEWEE: (Wailing) No!

HENRY: (In exasperation) What's the matter now?

PEEWEE: I want a whole ice cream cone for myself!

HENRY: All right - all right - so you get a whole ice cream cone. Come on, out the window you go.

(The boys lift Peewee over the window-sill and station her outside to keep watch).

BUD: Now, since it's nice and quiet around here, we can really enjoy this fine old haunted house.

HENRY: It's too quiet if you ask me. (Rattling noise) What was that?

BUD: Aw, just the wind blowing a shutter. There are a lot of loose ones on the front of the house. I noticed them when we came in.

HENRY: Oh-h say, where did you tell your mother you were going to stay tonight?

BUD: At your house - what'd you tell your mother?

HENRY: That I was going to stay at yours. I kind of wish I was.

BUD: You getting cold feet or something?

HENRY: I guess not. Only it is kind of lonesome here all by ourselves.

BUD: (Enthusiastically) What do you say we explore?

HENRY: (Falteringly) Ex-explore?

BUD: Sure - why not? We might find some hidden treasure in this good old haunted house.

HENRY: Or a ghost!

BUD: I don't believe in ghosts.

HENRY: Me neither.

(Just then the rattle of heavy chain is heard. Henry grabs Bud for protection. Even Bud looks a little startled.)

BUD: Jeepers - what do you suppose that was?

(Henry and Bud turn their backs to the window and look around the room. Peewee leans in the window and drops an old automobile chain on the floor. The sound scares the older boys who howl and jump a foot. When she sees how startled they are, Peewee giggles and calls to them.)

PEEWEE: (Still giggling) It sure doesn't take much to scare you fellows. Just a litty old chain I found under the window.

HENRY: (Furiously) What's the big idea?

BUD: Yeah - what are you trying to do, Peewee? Hen thought the ghost was coming for sure!

HENRY: I thought - what do you mean, I thought?

BUD: Aw, come on, Hen - let's explore.

HENRY: Well - you go first, then.

(They leave together.)

END SCENE 1

SCENE 2

NARRATOR: No sooner had the boys left the living room than Peewee scrambles through the window and calls again.

PEEWEE: Hey, Henry-Bud - where are you? There's someone coming down the road. I don't want to meet up with any old goblins, witches or ghosts. I'll just hide behind the sofa so they won't see me.

NARRATOR: Peewee takes her candy bag and squeezes behind the sofa. Two burglars with flashlights creep cautiously into the room. Brenda is very big and carries a small bag which she places on the table. Joe is small and thin with a sharp voice. Both wear black kerchiefs tied over the lower part of their faces.

JOE: I figger this oughta be a good place to lie low for a couple of hours.

BRENDA: (Stutters) If t-there are no h-haunts!

JOE: Whatcha talkin' about?

BRENDA (Protestingly) But J-Joe, it's Halloween, when the g-ghosts give up their d-dead. I know, I've seen 'em walkin'.

JOE: (Disgusted) Seen what, stupid?

BRENDA: Just what I s-s-said, haunts and ghosts - yeow!

JOE: What ails you anyhow?

BRENDA: (Looks) Sometimes I think you're not quite right in the head. Nobody's here. Come on, we'll look the joint over. We might even get a little shut-eye before we have to lam outa here.

BRENDA: But Joe, I s-s-saw a haunt - honest. I saw it with my own eyes.

JOE: (Growling) You see too much - that's what. Come on now, get movin!

NARRATOR: Joe and Brenda leave to explore the rest of the house. Peewee comes from behind the sofa. Let's listen to what she says.

PEEWEE: Gosh - they must have bet somebody they could sleep in this good, old haunted house all night, too. I wonder if they're going to get double scoop ice cream cones if they win. I didn't

notice this black bag before. I guess I'll just see what it has in it.

NARRATOR: Peewee takes the black bag from the table and prepares to open it when she hears voices. She scurries behind the sofa, taking the bag with her. Joe returns pushing Brenda in front of him.

JOE: Pipe down, will you? Why couldn't you look where you were going?

BRENDA In the d-d-dark, Joe?

JOE: (Disgustedly) Those big feet of yours would fall over each other in the middle of Main Street at high noon! Now, where's the bag?

BRENDA: I'm s-s-sure I left it right on the t-t-table, Joe.

JOE: You're sure - that's just fine and dandy. How can you be sure you're sure?

BRENDA: Maybe I'm not s-s-sure, Joe!

JOE: (Slowly, painstakingly) Listen, Brenda. Try to think - way back to five minutes ago. (Then shouting) What did you do with the bag?

BRENDA: Maybe the g-g-ghost took it!

JOE: (Groaning) You oughta have your brains examined - what there is of 'em.

BRENDA: (Pleased) My b-b-brains, Joe? Gee, thanks.

JOE: Come on, find that bag.

NARRATOR: Joe searches frantically for the bag. He throws things to the left and right. Brenda follows him, picking up and replacing everything Joe throws around.

BRENDA: (Muttering) Gee, you're making an awful m-m-mess of this place, Joe.

NARRATOR: While Brenda and Joe are looking the other way, Peewee creeps out and draws one of the cushions behind the sofa. For a while Brenda, who is tidying the room, cannot figure out why the sofa looks different. When she realizes a sofa pillow has disappeared, she runs over and tugs at Joe's sleeve.

Let go of me. What't the matter with you, anyhow?

BRENDA: One of the cushions is m-m-missin' Joe. It just sort of d-d-disappeared.

NARRATOR: Peevee slides the cushion out into the room while Brenda is talking to Joe.

JOE: (Turning around) There's your cushion dummy - right in front of your eyes.

BRENDA: I'm getting outa here - but fast.

JOE: (Shouting) Come back here, stupid.

END SCENE 2

NARRATOR: Bud and Henry return from their exploring the rest of the house.

BUD: Hey Hen, take a look out of the window to see if Peewee's still there.

HENRY: (Looks) Wow, she's gone - do you suppose someone's kidnapped her? Mum will really be mad if I've lost her.

BUD: (Looks behind sofa) Say Hen, here she is - she's fast asleep.

HENRY: Thank goodness. Hey look at this black bag. I wonder where she got it.

PEEWEE: (Waking up and stretching) Hi fellas. I frightened all your friends away for you. Now can I have a double scoop ice cream?

BUD: But I didn't think our friends would find us here. Say Peewee, what's in the black bag?

PEEWEE: I don't know. Hope it's candy.

BUD: Wow - a ton of money. We'd better take it home and tell Mum.

PEEWEE: Ooh! Well if you fellas will let me play on the ball team, maybe I'll get you a double scoop ice cream.

HENRY & BUD: (Sigh) Come on Peewee.

PEEWEE: (Drags the bag) Maybe a hundred ice cream cones.

2. THE BANK ROBBER

170

CHARACTERS: Robber - wears a mask and carries a gun
Manager - has a large money bag

ROBBER: (Practicing his lines outside the bank) Put up your hands - this is a stick up! Put up your hands - this is a stick up! Yes, that's it. Put up your hands - this is a stick up!

(He opens the door and rushes into the bank waving his gun)

Put up your sticks - this is a hand up! I mean, put up your hands - this is an up stick! Er - up with your sticks - this is a hand out. I mean ...

MANAGER: You mean this is a hold up!

ROBBER: Yes, that's it. Now - give me the money!

MANAGER: No!

ROBBER: What do you mean - No!

MANAGER: No, I'm not giving you the money.

ROBBER: Why not? I've got a gun you know (waves gun around) And it's real.

MANAGER: Yes I can see that - but I've decided not to give you the money.

ROBBER: Ooooooh. If I shoot you'll be all dead and laying on the floor, covered in blood and horrible and that.

MANAGER: Well you had better pull the trigger then.

ROBBER: You mean that?

MANAGER: Yes. Do you want me to close my eyes or turn around?

ROBBER: Come on - stop messing about - give me the money!

MANAGER: No - shan't. (He presses the burglar alarm)

ROBBER: Ooooooh! That's the alarm bell. What did you do that for?

MANAGER: To fetch the police.

ROBBER: They'll come and take me away and lock me up.

MANAGER: I know - so you'd better hurry up and get out of here. I don't want you to get caught, you clot.

ROBBER: Well, I'm not going.

MANAGER: What!

ROBBER: I'm not going - not without the money.

MANAGER: Hurry up, you idiot. The policy will be here any minute.

ROBBER: No! Shan't!

MANAGER: Go!

ROBBER: No!

MANAGER: (Sighs) Oh. O.K. Here. Take the money.

ROBBER: Ooooh! Thanks! (He grabs the money bag and runs out.

C U R T A I N

CHARACTERS: Ug, a monster
Wizard
Girl
Narrator
Handsome Prince

PROPS: A bag
An invitation card
Magic wand
Puff of smoke (2 chalkboard brushes)

NARRATOR: The play begins when a mean magician and his pet monster are getting ready to leave their cave to go to the Wizard's convention.

MAGICIAN: Hurry up, monster, or we'll be late.

MONSTER: Ug.

MAGICIAN: That's all very well, but you'll have to carry my bag of magic tricks.

MONSTER: Ug. Ug.

MAGICIAN: Well then, I'll just use my magic wand to change you into a worm and the birds will eat you.

MONSTER: Ug. Ug. Ug. (Picks up the bag and scurries off stage).

MAGICIAN: Let's see now. I have my wand here for all my magic (puts the wand down), but I'll need my invitation card to get into the convention. I'd better get it now.

NARRATOR: While the Magician is gone, a young girl who has been exploring the cave wanders by.

GIRL: What a swell cave this is. Just wait 'til I get home and tell my friends about this place! Hello, what's this? Boy what a nice stick. I think I'll take it home with me to use in that kite I'm making.

(Magician returns and sees the girl)

MAGICIAN: Hey, what are you doing with that? It's mine.

GIRL: No, it's not. I found it.

MAGICIAN: Well then, I'll just take it.

(They pull the wand backwards and forwards and the magician slips off and crushes his hat and bangs his head.)

- MAGICIAN: Ouch, that hurt! Now you've asked for it. Hey, monster, come here! (Monster comes on and the girl screams and runs to hide.)
- MAGICIAN: Now, monster, I want you to catch that girl and eat her!
- MONSTER: Ug. (shakes head)
- MAGICIAN: What do you mean, no?
- MONSTER: Ug! Ug! (shakes head vigorously)
- MAGICIAN: Well, I'll change you into a stone with my magic wand.
- MONSTER: Ug! (gets closer to magician)
- MAGICIAN: Oh, that's right. I don't have my magic wand, do I? Now, don't get mad - keep back. (Monster chases and bites the magician) Ouch! Oh! No! Stop! Ouch! (They go off stage).
- GIRL: Well, it looks safe to come out now. That monster sure was ugly.
- (The monster comes up behind the girl)
- MONSTER: (Loudly) Ug!
- GIRL: Oh, no. I'm trapped.
- MONSTER: Ug! Ug! (in a friendly manner)
- GIRL: You mean you won't hurt me?
- MONSTER: (Shakes head) Ug.
- GIRL: Oh, well, that's nice then. I wonder why this stick is so important anyway. Maybe it's magic.
- MONSTER: (Nods) Ug.
- GIRL: It is? Oh, wow! Then maybe you're not a monster but a handsome prince.
- MONSTER: (Nods vigorously) Ug! Ug!
- GIRL: You are! Well now, how can we change you back into a handsome prince. Maybe this magic wand. (Touches the monster with the wand and nothing happens) Well that doesn't work.

MONSTER: Ug. Ug! (Shakes head)

GIRL: Oh, no, you don't mean I have to kiss you?

MONSTER: (Nods head yes) Ug! Ug!

GIRL: But you're so ukky.

MONSTER: (Sadly) Ug! (Turns away)

GIRL: There, there. I didn't mean it. Now hold still and I'll do my best. (Draws back first time, but second time she manages to kiss his head. The monster instantly changes to a handsome prince.)

GIRL: My, you are handsome! (Looks him over) What's your name?

PRINCE: Ug! (Runs around) Ug, ug, ug, ug.

GIRL: Oh, no! (Faints)

C U R T A I N

4. THE GHOST WITH ONE BLACK EYE

175

CHARACTERS: Narrator
Hotel clerk (looks sleazy)
Avon sales representative
A tennis pro
A champion boxer

PROPS: A desk for the hotel clerk
A mock up light switch
A bed
Play money or Monopoly money

SCENE 1

NARRATOR: We would like to present a puppet play called "The Ghost with One Black Eye". (As the play opens a hotel clerk is busy at his desk as a customer approaches.)

TENNIS PRO: Hi. I'm a famous tennis pro and I'm in town for the big tournament tomorrow. Do you have a room for the night?

CLERK: I'm sorry, sir. All the rooms are full except for number 13 and we leave that one empty as customers say that its haunted.

TENNIS PRO: That's O.K. I'm not afraid of any old ghost. I'll take it.

CLERK: As you wish, sir. That'll be \$30 please. (Tennis pro gives clerk \$30, counting as he does so.) Thank you. Here's the key. Number 13 is straight down the hall -- last door on your left.

(Exit Tennis pro and Clerk)

(Leave curtain open -- remove clerk's desk and put on stage the bed and mock light switch.)

(Tennis pro enters and turns on the light and looks around the room.)

TENNIS PRO: Mm. This room looks fine. I'll just practice my backhand and overhead smash for a while. (Practices for a short while) Oh well, time for bed. I don't want to be tired tomorrow. (Goes to bed and turns out the light)

(Enter ghost with the one black eye, who is the hotel clerk covered with a sheet having one black eye.)

GHOST: I am the ghost with one black eye.

TENNIS PRO: (Sleepily) What?

GHOST: (Louder) I said, I'm the ghost with one black eye.

TENNIS PRO: Wha! (Screams and rushes out chased by the ghost).

SCENE 2

NARRATOR: Back at the Hotel Clerk's desk later that evening (An Avon representative arrives carrying her case of goodies.)

AVON REP.: Hello. Have you a spare room please? I've been working all day and my feet are dropping off.

HOTEL CLERK: I'm sorry ma'am. All the rooms are full except for number 13 and we leave that one empty as customers say that it's haunted.

AVON REP.: Well, my feet won't budge another block, so I'll take it. How much do I owe you.

DESK CLERK: As you wish, ma'am. That will be \$30 please. (Avon Rep. counts out the money aloud and hands it to the clerk) Thank you. Here's the key. Number 13 is straight down the hall -- last door on your left.

(Exit Avon Rep. & Clerk)

(Leave curtain open. Remove Clerk's desk and put on stage bed and mock light switch.)

(Avon rep. enters room, turns on light and looks around.)

AVON REP.: Mm. Nice enough room. I'd better take my make-up off in the bathroom. (leaves stage and comes back as exchange puppet, much plainer and in curlers, etc.) Now for a good night's sleep. (Goes to bed and turns off light.)

(Enter ghost)

GHOST: Ha! Ha! Ha! I'm the ghost with one black eye.

AVON REP.: (Sleepily) What's that?

GHOST: Don't you listen! (Loudly) I said, I'm the ghost with one black eye.

AVON REP.: Wha----A Ghost! (Screams and runs out, chased by the ghost.)

SCENE 3

NARRATOR: Back at the hotel clerk's desk, much later in the evening. (A champion boxer arrives in his boxing gloves, practicing his shadow boxing.)

BOXER: (Grunts) Ha. Hm. I'm Gordie Racette, and I'm in town for the championship fight tomorrow. Do you have a room for the night?

CLERK: I'm sorry sir. All the room's are full except for Number 13 and we leave that one empty as customers say it's haunted.

BOXER: Well, I'm not afraid of any ghost. I'll take the room. How much do I owe you?

CLERK: As you wish, sir. That will be \$30. (Boxer counts out the money aloud and hands it to the clerk) Thank you. Here's the key. Number 13 is straight down the hall -- last door on your left.

(Exit Boxer and Clerk.)

(Leave curtain open. Remove Clerk's desk and put on stage bed and mock light switch.)

(Boxer enters room, turns on light and looks around.)

BOXER: Mm. Room looks right enough. I'll just practice a little shadow before going to bed. (Grunts as he practices) Ho hum. Oh, well, time for bed. Don't want to be tired for the big fight. (Goes to bed and turns off the light.)

(Enter the ghost)

GHOST: Hal hal hal I'm the ghost with one black eye.

BOXER: (Sleepily) Oh, oh, what was that?

GHOST: (Loudly) I said, I'm the ghost with one black eye.

BOXER: Oh, you are, are you! (Turns on the light and jumps up) When I get you, you'll be the ghost with at least two black eyes.

(He chases the ghost around the room and finally grabs the sheet off, revealing the hotel clerk.)

So it's you. Just wait 'til I get my hands on you. (He chases the Clerk who is screaming off stage.)

(Take off the bed and light switch and replace with the Hotel Clerk's desk.)

(Clerk enters carrying all the \$90.)

CLERK: Phew! That was close. I gave him the slip on the back stairs. He looks mean too. Now let's see how much I made this month. (He counts onto the playboard) 100, 200, 300, 400,

(Just then, the boxer enters and creeps up behind the clerk)

BOXER: Gotcha!

(The Clerk in his surprise throws all the money up and out of the front of the puppet theatre. It all flutters down as the boxer chases the clerk around.)

CLERK: (As he gets bopped) Ouch! ooch! stop! All my money has gone out the window. Ouch! no! stop! I'll have to work for months to pay the hotel all the money that's gone.

BOXER: (As he chases the clerk out) And what about the hospital bills?

C U R T A I N

5. The Chinese Cinderella (Bunraku play)

Characters: Wing Woo (narrator)
Stepmother
Stepsister
Pear Blossom
Lin Yun
Cow
Procession performers
Property men
Doves

Scene 1. (Introductory music)*

The scene is a bare stage. Wing-Woo, dressed in an elaborate gown, enters. He strikes a gong which he carries.

WING-WOO: Honorable ladies and gentlemen (Bows to right, left, center.) Kind permission to present a play about Pear Blossom, a little girl of Old China.

The property men will first set the stage. They are supposed to be invisible to your eyes, honorable ladies and gentlemen. (He strikes a gong and four property men dressed all in black enter. They arrange several stools. When Wing-Woo strikes the gong again, the property men go to the left side of the stage and two to the right. They kneel facing the audience.)

In the story we enact for you today, Pear Blossom, the young girl you see here, washes clothes all night and day.

(Pear Blossom enters and kneels. Two prop men bring her a wash tub. She washes invisible clothes, carefully wrings them out, and hangs them on an invisible clothes line.)

WING-WOO: Pear Blossom has a step-mother and step-sister, both of whom hate hard work, and hate most of all any house work.

(The stepmother and the stepsister enter, and address Pear Blossom.)

STEPMOTHER: Where is my handkerchief?

STEPSISTER: Why isn't my robe ready? I want to parade before the mirror and admire myself in it.

PEAR BLOSSOM: (Replying sweetly.) I am washing them now.

STEPMOTHER: Work is all you are good for, Little Pigling.

PEAR BLOSSOM: Please do not call me that terrible name. My name is Pear Blossom.

STEPMOTHER: Never mind what we call you, Little Pigling. You have your work to do. When you have finished the washing, there is the kitchen to put in order.

STEPSISTER: And the dusting.

STEPMOTHER: And the baking.

STEPSISTER: And the mending.

STEPMOTHER: And the polishing.

STEPSISTER: And the cleaning.

STEPMOTHER: And the cooking.

STEPSISTER: And the scrubbing.

STEPSISTER: Come, let's leave her and go to bed. I must rest so that I can be beautiful in the morning.

STEPMOTHER: Don't you dare go to bed until every instruction is obeyed, Little Pigling.

PEAR BLOSSOM: I won't. But please, oh please, call me Pear Blossom. My name is the only thing that I possess that is beautiful. (Stepmother and stepsister laugh and exit. Pear Blossom sits beside her bucket and weeps.)

WING-WOO: As she was crying, Pear Blossom thought that if she finished all the work she had been instructed to perform, she too might go to the royal procession. She worked nearly the whole night through. She did everything that her mother asked. She did the washing. (She pantomimes each action.) She did the dusting. She did the baking. She did the mending. She did the polishing. She did the cleaning. She did the cooking. She did the scrubbing. And when she was finished, she closed the door—just as her mother said. And then she crept in the corner and went to sleep. (The property men spread out a mat and Pear Blossom goes to sleep.)

Scene 2

Dream music *

WING-WOO: But she hadn't long to wait until she heard the roosters crow. (One of the property men crows in her ear.) And then she felt the warm rays of the sun on her forehead. (Another property man carries a paper cut-out sun with long yellow streamers on it; he dangles these in her face.)

Scene 3

PEAR BLOSSOM: (Stretching and yawning.) I must get up and prepare the robes for stepmother and sister. (The step-mother and sister enter wearing their new robes.)

STEPSISTER: Pigling, help me with this sash. I can't get it straight.

STEPMOTHER: Fasten my kimono, Little Pigling.

PEAR BLOSSOM: May I ask your permission to speak . . .

STEPSISTER: Of course not, we are much too busy prettying ourselves to listen to your chatter, silly Pigling.

PEAR BLOSSOM: I only want to ask if I may go to the procession.

(Stepmother and sister laugh.)

STEPMOTHER: You may go when you have husked all the rice in these three water jars. (Prop men carry in large water jugs.)

STEPSISTER: And don't miss a grain. (She laughs.)

PEAR BLOSSOM: One young girl cannot crack all this rice in a day . . .

STEPMOTHER: (Pantomimes opening the door.) Now let us go into the street. (They go through the door.) Oh, yes, Little Pigling, I forget. Before you go to the procession you must remove all these weeds.

PEAR BLOSSOM: (Sadly.) Very well, I will remove the weeds after I have cracked and husked the rice.

stepmother and sister go off fluttering their fans and laughing.)

WING-WOO: Pear Blossom thought and thought how she might get all this work done, and still go to the procession. She was puzzled by the problem. And there was no answer. The work would take too long to finish. She could no longer hold back those tears.

Scene 4

(Kneeling on a mat provided by a property man, Pear Blossom sometimes crying. Another property man brings a small bowl filled with water and sprinkles a few drops on her cheeks.)

WING-WOO: It so happened that outside in a tree nearby sat several white doves who heard the conversation. They flew into the kitchen and fluttered around Pear Blossom. They wanted to cheer her up.

*music for doves flying

(During Wing-Woo's speech the birds have come through the door, and they dance around Pear Blossom.)

WING-WOO: And they knew a way they could help. Each bird took a jar of rice. *(The property men hand jars to birds, and they spread out the rice. The birds pantomime this and the following action.)* They took the rice and quickly cracked it.

PEAR BLOSSOM: *(Seeing the birds for the first time, she is at first alarmed.)* Pretty birds, you must not eat our rice. I wish I could give you some, but my stepmother holds me responsible for every grain. *(Then she realizes what they are doing.)* But you are not eating the rice. You are cracking and husking it. How did you know that I had to do this in order to go to the procession? You wonderful birds! *!! (In dance, the doves work faster and when they finish they hold up jars.)*

PEAR BLOSSOM: *(Excited and happy.)* You have done all my work for me! Now I will be able to go to the procession after all. Thank you. *(She pantomimes opening door and carefully closing it behind her and then stops suddenly.)* Oh, the weeds! I forgot all about the weeds! You can hardly get through them. *(She steps over the imaginary weeds.)* I will not be able to go after all.

WING-WOO: Once more little Pear Blossom was broken hearted. Once more she tried not to cry. Once more she had to cry just a little bit. *(This time the property man sprinkles one drop of water on her cheek.)*

WING-WOO: It so happened that in a field next to the garden, a big cow was grazing. And the cow heard Pear Blossom's plight and wanted to help her as best it could.

(The cow enters and comes to Pear Blossom.)

PEAR BLOSSOM: What are you doing here, kind Cow?

WING-WOO: The cow knew the easiest way to remove those weeds. And it went to work. *(The cow dances, eating the weeds.)*

PEAR BLOSSOM: I see. You are helping me just as the birds did. You are eating all the weeds. *(The cow nods and chews.)* How very kind! Now I can go to the procession, for all my work is finished. *(PROCESSION MUSIC *)*

WING-WOO: At the end of the procession came Lin Yun, a rich young man, who was visiting in the city that day, and who for some time had been looking for a wife.

(Pear Blossom turns suddenly as the procession goes by and bumps into Lin Yun.)

PEAR BLOSSOM: I am very sorry. I was busy watching the procession, and I did not see you. *(She bows to him.)*

LIN YUN: *(He bows to her.)* What is your name?

PEAR BLOSSOM: My real name is Pear Blossom, but I am called Little Figling.

LIN YUN: I will call you Pear Blossom.

PEAR BLOSSOM: Thank you. *(They continue to speak in pantomime.) (Stepmother and stepmother enter.)*

STEMMOTHER: *(Pointing at Pear Blossom.)* Look, that silly creature is talking to Lin Yun, the wealthiest man in all of China.

STEMMOTHER: I have been looking everywhere for him all day. How did she find him?

STEMMOTHER: Let's shoo her away.

STEMMOTHER: Make certain he notices me.

STEMMOTHER: This is my daughter. A lovely girl, isn't she?

LIN YUN: *(Still looking at Pear Blossom.)* Indeed she is.

STEMMOTHER: Not that wretch. Me!

STEMMOTHER: Not Figling. This is my daughter, Lin Yun. I know you are looking for a wife, and here is the perfect girl.

LIN YUN: *(Still looking at Pear Blossom.)* I quite agree.

STEMMOTHER: Not her, me!

LIN YUN: I have found the girl I have long sought. Pear Blossom.

WING-WOO: The rich Lin Yun presented Pear Blossom—as she was called from then on—with a pair of beautiful red velvet slippers, which she wore on all special occasions, such as her wedding day. *(Lin Yun puts slippers on Pear Blossom's feet and leads her across the stage.)* And Lin Yun took her away from the life of drudgery she had known.

WING-WOO: And while Pear Blossom lived happily, her proud sister sat at home.

WING-WOO: And ~~slowly~~ the Proud Sister learned the lesson that she would never receive kindness unless she was kind herself. (And this, honorable ladies and gentlemen, is the lesson of our simple story of Pear Blossom, who to this day keeps a picture of the doves and the cow on the walls of her house in honor of their kindness to her.)

We thank you, honorable audience, for permitting us to present our play. We hope you took pleasure in it. Farewell. (Wing-Woo, Pear Blossom, and Lin Yun bow to all sides and go out as a gong rings.)

CURTAIN

gong rings



THE POSTMAN

(Grade 5)

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CHARACTERS: Postman
Dora
The Postman's Wife
Dog
Narrator

PROPS: A postman's bag
A parcel
A fence
A branch

NARRATOR: As the play opens, the postman is delivering the mail just before Christmas. he is at the Joneses house where there is a fence, and at one end of the fence, a dog kennel where a dog is sleeping. A tree branch overhangs the fence, high above.

POSTMAN: (Looking at parcel) Ah, a parcel for Mr. and Mrs. Jones at 328. I hope their vicious dog is not loose today. (He walks behind the fence towards the dog kennel.)

DOG: (Waking up) Woof! woof! woof! (He chases the postman off stage)

POSTMAN: (Comes slowly back on stage) I've got to deliver this parcel or I'll lose my job, so maybe if I climb on top of this fence I can get by that mean dog. (He climbs on the fence and tiptoes along, but trips right onto the dog kennel) Oops! Oh, no!

DOG: (Waking up) Woof! woof! woof! (He chases the postman off stage)

POSTMAN: (Comes slowly back on stage) Now, how am I going to deliver this parcel to the Joneses? Maybe if I climb on the fence, I can hang on this branch and climb over the kennel. Help! I'm falling. (Falls off the branch).

DOG: (Waking up) Woof! woof! woof! (He chases the postman off stage)

POSTMAN: (Offstage to his wife) Hey, Dora, would you please deliver this parcel to the Joneses for me, please. My leg is sore and I have to work late tomorrow.

DORA: (Offstage) O.K., dear. Give me the parcel. (Comes onstage) This looks like the house. Yes, number 328. (She walks behind the fence and wakes

the dog up.

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DOG: Woof! woof! woof!

DORA: Woof! woof! woof!, yourself! (The dog runs in the kennel, whimpering) There, there, nice doggie. it's O.K. I won't hurt you. You're a nice dog. (Pats the dog on the head) Now, I must deliver this parcel. (She goes offstage)

DORA: (Offstage) Here's your parcel, Mrs. Jones. What's that? Do I know anyone who wants a dog? Could I have him? Thanks very much.

DORA: (She comes back and takes the dog) Come along, doggie. You're going to live with Fred and me now. He's a postman. You'll like him.

DORA: (Offstage) Hi, Dear, I'm home. Look what I've got. The Joneses said we could have this nice dog.

DOG: (Offstage) Woof! woof! woof!

POSTMAN: On, no! Help! Stop that! Get down! Help!

(The dog chases the postman across the stage)
Help! Stop it! Ouch!

RAVING RED RIDING HOOD
(Grade 5)

CHARACTERS: Narrator
Mom
Raving Red Riding Hood
Wicked Wolf
Grandmother

PROPS: Basket of Goodies

MOM: Yoo-hoo, Red! Turn off the TV and come in here.

RED: Aw, Mom. "The Hulk" is on; it's my favorite program. Do I have to?

MOM: Yes, dear. This is very important. Granny just called and she's feelin' a little under the weather. I've put together some goodies in this basket and I want you to tool on over and take them to her.

RED: Wow, this is heavy! Whadya put in here, bricks?

MOM: No, dear. I wrapped up an enchilada TV dinner, a couple of Dr. Peppers, and a bottle of Excedrin. Now, get going.

RED: Okay, bye, Ma.

MOM: Good-bye dear!

NARRATOR: Red, being the responsible daughter that she is, takes off without delay. She is walking through the park on the way to Grandma's when she hears someone whistle at her and turns.

RED: Who was that?

(The whistle is heard again and the wolf appears)

WOLF: Hiya, Red!

RED: Oh, it's you! I should have guessed. Listen, I don't pay any attention to wolf whistles, so bug off.

WOLF: Hey, not so fast, Chickie. Where are you off to?

RED: I am not a "chickie" and where I'm off to is none of your business!

WOLF: Hey! Hey! Hey! Cool it. Will ya look at those goodies. Goin' on a picnic, Chickie?

RED: Honestly, you are driving me crazy! No, I'm not going on a picnic. I'm going to my grandmother's because she is feeling sick and I've got to get movin'.

WOLF: Okeydokey. Bye-bye-ee!

NARRATOR: But the wolf has other ideas. Little does Raving Red know, but the wicked wolf goes bananas over enchiladas! he picked up the scent right away and he's determined to get them for himself. So he scampers off, taking a shortcut to Granny's. When he gets there, he mugs Granny, ties her up, and locks her in the closet.

NARRATOR: Shhh! Raving Red is arriving. (Knock, knock, knock).

WOLF: Come in, dear!

RED: Hi, Granny! Sorry to hear you're feelin' bad, but I brought you some things that will perk you up right away. I thought ... Say, Granny, what big eyes you have!

WOLF: It's my new matching eye pencil and shadow, dear. You like it?

RED: And, Granny, what big ears you have!

WOLF: All the better to hear you, honey. Speak up!

RED: And Granny, what big teeth you have!

WOLF: All the better to eat them enchiladas, baby!

NARRATOR: With that, the wolf reaches for the picnic basket. But our Raving Red Riding is nobody's fool. She hasn't been taking karate for three years for nothing! With feet firm, she screams "Saw-gow-ee" and lands a swift karate chop on the back of wolfie's neck. now, alerted by muffled noises in the closet, she opens the door and rescues Granny, who has developed a crick in her back from sitting in that tiny closet. The two hug each other. Granny settles into her rocker and is given the goodies.

GRANNY: Red, it's so good to see ya, honey! Have a Dr. Pepper and come sit down. I think we can just catch the rest of "The Hulk"!

BABY TALK

(Grade 3)

Narrator: As the play opens we find two babies talking.

John: Hi, my name's John. Do you want to know what I did to my Mom last night?

Wally: I'm Wally. What did you do?

John: Mom told me I couldn't get down from my chair until I swallowed watery tuna fish that was sitting in my mouth for 20 minutes.

Wally: What happened?

John: I sneezed.

Wally: I did better than that. I flushed our cat down the toilet and I hid Grandma's teeth in the dog food.

Lisa: let's go out for lunch.

Ian: My treat.

John: Do your parents spank you

when you do something wrong.

Wally: Yah. But I think it just makes them feel better.

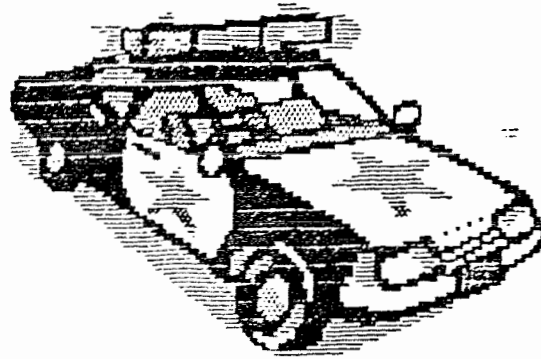
John: Mom told me not to sit close to TV because, it's like the sun burning your skin. She goes on about eyes glasses, doctor.

Wally: Yah it's true. What I do is get my sunglasses and wear them. Hey are you hungry?

John: Yah. let's yell.

Narrator: Both babies yell.

Parents: Be quiet! Are hungry. Let's drool!



The
Bank
Robbery

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- Robber:** Put up your sticks - this is a hand up, I mean put up your hands - this is an up stick. Er - up with your sticks - this is a hand out. I mean just give me the money.
- Lawyer:** Oh - please don't rob this bank - it has all my money here.
- Manager:** If you make one move, I will sound the alarm.
- Robber:** Oh - please don't sound the alarm or the police will take me away.
- Lawyer:** I'm scared - I want my mommy!!
- Narrator:** The lawyer hides behind the safe - weeping.
- Manager:** I'm pressing the alarm now.

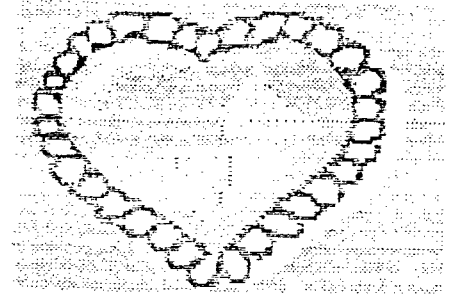
- Policeman:** O.K. Mr. Manager - what's the trouble here.
- Manager:** This young man tried to hold up the bank.
- Policeman:** You will have to go to jail for committing a crime mister.
- Narrator:** The lawyer peeks from behind the safe to see it is safe to come out!
- Robber:** Oh, please don't take me to jail - I didn't mean any harm.
- Policeman:** Come on, get out the door with you - into the car.
- Lawyer:** Oh - I wasn't scared. All I was doing wasahhh... counting my money - yes, that's it..... counting my money!

The End

THE WEIRDEST VALENTINE'S DAY EVER

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(Grade 4)



Narrator: As the play opens, we find two people walking by a cave in a park. Their names are Ted and Sandra. When accidentally, a wizard drops a love potion on their heads.

Ted: I feel diiiiiiiiizzzzzzzzzz!

Sandra: Sooo dooo III!

Wizard: Oh no! That was my love potion.

Ted: III Hoovvee youuu. I must kiss youuuuu.

Sandra: I must kiss you. I neeeded you.

Ted: I need Sandra. (Ted crashes through wall).

Sandra: I need Tedddddd. Give me Ted.

Ted: Give me Sandra , Coomme to me now! Will you marry me?

Sandra: Yes! Of course, Ted , my darling.

Wizard: This love-crazy business is driving me nuts. But I have a plan.They say love is blind so I'll give them glasses!

Narrator: At the wedding.

Wizard: I hope these glasses work!

Priest: If anybody here thinks this couple should not be married, may they speak now or forever hold their peace.

Wizard: Wait! They forgot to pass their eye exams! (gets out eye-chart) Read this.

Ted: A,U,R,C,D,E,I,F,J,A.

Sandra: A,U,R,C,D,E,I,F,J,A.

THE CAPTURE OF THE FIVE DUCKS.

(Grade 4)

Narrator: Hello, my name is Al the Alligator and I'm going to be the narrator for today. I'm going to tell you a story. It all started with Jeff the Chef and his daughter, Sarah Larah, and her five ducks that belonged to her. The problem of the story is that the duck eater Woolly the wolf always tries to catch the ducks".

Sarah: "Time to feed the ducks, oh no they're gone!!!!!! I'm going to find them right now!!

Sarah: "I'll go look in the pond not there!" "I'll go look in the river not there!! BUT AN ALLIGATOR IS!!!!!!!!!!!!".

Al: and thats when I come in."I spied

to catch the rest, she ran into the forest I don't know why."

Sarah: "Oh a wolf is on the fence with a bag thats, I'll ask him if he has seen the ducks. Have you seen 5 ducks well 4 little and one big duck."

Wolly: "Ducks why no deary dear."

Sarah: "I'll get you you you bulldozer!!" "no actually I mean a bull that sleeps!!

Al: "she ran back to her dad!!"

Jeff: "no you are to little!!!!"

Sarah: "I,ll take this then!!!!"
(take masterpeice)

Jeff: "MY MASTERPIECE"(then all

meet together)

Jeff:"NOW!!!!!! (throw masterpiece)

Jeff:"My baby masterpiece it took me so long to do that masterpiece.

Wolf:I never got to see China(wolf dies).

THE END

Little Red Riding Hood

(Grade 4)

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Mom: Red stop doing your homework and come down here or you'll be grounded for a week.

Red: Oh Mom be quiet you know its important . So leave me alone.

Mom: Red come here. Your Grandmother just called to say she made a new dish. She said it was great so I want you to go over there and try it.

Nar: Granny's food is terrible even you would not like it.

Red: But Moomom do I have to? I might get sick and die.

Nar: Red leaves home and goes to Grandma's house without dawdling.

Wolf: Yoo-hoo Red.

Red: W-w-what was that? I get it I'm on Candid camera. Right? But where is the camera?(scared)

Wolf: Where are you off to baby? Are you lost

Red: Im not a baby and I'm not telling

you where I'm going . My name is Red
R-E-D Red! So be quiet.

Wolf: Ple-e-ase.

Red: Ok I'm off to my Grandmothers
house. Now can you leave me alone.

Nar: The wolf plays a trick on Red.
He runs to Granny's. I think I here
Red arriving.

Red: Granny are you there?

Wolf: come in dear I have some food
for you.

Nar: Right away she knew it was the
wolf's face by the big eyes, teeth
and ears. She took a sword and cut
the wolf in half and out popped
Granny.

GRANNY: Hello Red let's have some of
my food.

Red: Oh no !!!!!

CARE ENJO

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