PROFESSIONAL PROJECT.

DRAMA FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

(MOTOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT)

FIONA CAMERON

P.G.C.E.

(Secondary)

May 1991.
"What It's Like To Be Me" - Edited by Helen Exley.

Written by Disabled Children.

So what if I'm awkward,
always wiggling and shaking.

So what if I'm clumsy,
always dropping and breaking.

So what if you have trouble,
understanding what I'm trying to say.

Does that mean I'm dumb,
NO WAY.

Heidi Janz (aged 14)
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To Shelia Peterson and the pupils at Prospect Bank Primary School, Leith, Edinburgh, for all their help during this project.
1. INTRODUCTION.

I became interested in movement, relating to a child's development, whilst on placement in Secondary Schools. I noticed a general lack of confidence in the ability to use movement. I observed that almost one third of the pupils in each of the classed I took seemed to have difficulty with movement and could be perceived as "Clumsy Children". I was interested in the reasons. I asked the children what they found difficult within their school syllabus. Many of these "Clumsy Children" expressed difficulties with reading and writing and in the area of Mathematics. For subjects like English and Mathematics most of these children were in the foundation class for the Standard Grade Examinations. I began to wonder if there was a connection between under-developed motor skills and general academic and social behaviour.

What happens if a child does not develop their motor skills fully at an early age. If they are slower at picking up these skills than the other children, do they really have the chance to develop these skills at a later date during their education. I have found very little evidence supporting that opinion. Primary 1- Primary 3 are structured around play based learning, "learning by doing". After Primary 3 the work changes to more cognitive based learning and more classroom structured. If the children do not develop their motor skills at this early stage, in my opinion, there is little or no provision given for extensive movement development in Secondary Schools. Can movement skills be developed at Secondary School level or is it too late by then? I feel improvements can still be made at this level, including those pupils who have rejected Physical Education, Drama is a medium through which it is possible to reach these children.

These questions have directly affected my teaching style. Until I made these observations I had not realised the importance of creative movement, mime and relaxation. Now they will be integrated to a fuller extent throughout my teaching of Drama.

This led me to consider why I had not realised the importance of creative movement within my subject. Dorothy Heathcote suggests that this is the fault of our British society. A society that relies heavily on the verbal communication and is not given to
extravagant gestures. Unlike many of our European counterparts, who extravagantly gesture as a vital part of communication. British people view their bodies, primarily, as an instrument for 'getting around.' Therefore we have developed a wider range of verbal than non-verbal expressions. I have realised that as a teacher, I must be aware of this and be willing to develop children's movement skills to their full potential.

It is true to say that children find it easier to communicate through non-verbal responses. Although through my observations from comparing Primary and Secondary schools, is that, this natural expression becomes less and less apparent the older the child becomes.

Although in the early stages at Primary schools a motor skill development programme is common, it should not be ignored at the Secondary school level. Unfortunately most of these Primary programmes tend to be helping the child to become a better classroom participant and are solely interested in cognitive development to the exclusion of general motor skill development. This, I believe, will ultimately cause difficult problems for the developing child. The acquisition of certain motor skills in a young child is apparent to development in reading, writing and Arithmetic skills. There is the inherent danger in denying a child the basic right to move in later stages of development. The unnatural structure of the classroom, for a young child, produces an unnatural atmosphere with emphasis on small muscle control, under tightly structured conditions. This can often create, within the child, an early dislike of teachers and school, leading to behavioural problems. I observed that in Secondary Schools; these disruptive pupils, for obvious reasons spent many hours of their school life isolated or excluded from the classroom and consequently if these children have not developed their motor skills they are not afforded the opportunity to catch up with the other children.

With the integration of Special Needs pupils into "mainstream" education, the education system must evaluate its approach.

Drama is interactive by nature and has a non-structured classroom lay-out. This already encourages the pupil to move and to interact freely with different groups. It is, in my view, the only subject that encourages the child to use movement and non-verbal communication in an expressive manner and within the mixed ability framework.

Let us look at the importance of motor skill development and how it relates to firstly,
intellectual development and secondly, social development.


To state a hard and fast rule that all "clumsy" children are under-achieving academically, would be unrealistic. There are intelligent children that suffer from difficulties of co-ordination. It is also true that children with severe physical handicaps have achieved success at the academic level of university degrees. These, however, seem to be exceptions. Most studies show that there is only a very tenuous relationship between intelligence and physical skill. They do however indicate a strong link between certain aspects of motor development and school achievement. Ismail and Gruber (1967) carried out extensive study of fifth and sixth graders in the U.S.A. They used forty two different items to measure motor and intellectual abilities. Their findings showed that while growth was not related to intelligence, co-ordination and rhythm were significantly and positively related to academic achievement. They also found that strength, speed and accuracy of aim showed some relation to academic progress.

The Cheshire Education Committee's report on Special Needs Children (1973) stated:
"By the time they reach Secondary school, children of low intelligence are generally of poorer physical development and are less able than the more intelligent."

The report continues:
"Some dull children have excellent co-ordination but the majority suffer from lack of contrast in range and quality of movement and are prone to accidents because of clumsiness."

W. Allen, working with junior aged boys that had been referred to remedial centres for difficulties with reading and writing, found a connection between motor impairment and the ability to read and write. He found that just over 50% of these boys suffered from general motor impairment (as defined by D.H. Stotts' studies of Troublesome Children 1966)

Researchers of children in Special Schools have found similar relationships. Guilford (1966) found a definite connection between difficulties over body and space
between poor progress in reading and difficulties in rhythm as well as spatial awareness. The importance of developing motor skills in early childhood for later intellectual development is well established in the work of Piaget and Kephart. Kephart (1960) has said, "Motor patterns are the foundation for more complex learning, because motor patterns provide the basis for meaningful orientation."

In my opinion the pressures of the education system to provide examinations in English and Mathematics at Primary level, may cause an added pressure to skim of the necessary development in these areas. Resulting in an increase in difficulties in these areas. Surely if one accepts the findings of the aforementioned studies in the relationship between motor difficulties and intellectual development, then it is not unreasonable to suppose that if pupils physical abilities can be improved this will have a positive impact on their academic progress.

3. The Relationship Between Physical Skills and Social Development.

The relationship between physical ineptness and emotional disturbance was shown in a study carried out in Glasgow and reported by Stott (1966). Delinquent youths were shown to have significantly poorer motor co-ordination than comparable non-delinquents. Is this the impact of a disturbed mind on the body or the effect of clumsiness upon the mental state?

It has been known for children with problems of co-ordination to be wrongly classified as below average intelligence. "The problem of clumsiness is distressing to children of average intelligence; it can be devastating for those of less intelligence" (L. Groves 1979).

If the children are clumsy they are often rejected and even mocked by their peers. The tendency of parents and teachers to force the child to join in these peer groups can be disastrous, if they are not given time to develop their motor skills and confidence first. If children miss out on this early group play, it would be reasonable to say that they miss out on valuable social experiences. Group experiences are closely linked to awareness of self and feelings of self-esteem. There can be much stress and heartache in failing to achieve in physical activities succeed.
This failure may produce a feeling of aggression within the child. Over aggression and over passivity are both problems observed in clumsy children. Lack of self image and confidence may have the child scared to face many day to day situations. Over aggressiveness with symptoms of pent up frustrations, hostility and a failure at establishing relationships with individuals, cause the child to find expression in inappropriate behaviour. These could be tantrums, destructiveness, playing by themselves and a general inability to cope with their aggressive feelings. Such behaviour can be helped by using programmes designed to manage aggression. A child who is physically awkward is usually considered emotionally fragile. In my opinion helping the child to gain self confidence should be of the highest priority. Success must be built on success. As a positive self concept is built, ego strength develops to a level that the child can risk failure. Risking failure takes courage; therefore one of the most important goals of a programme is confidence building. B.F. Skinner's techniques of positive reinforcement in order to change behaviour patterns can be used to this end.
4. Theories Relating to Education.

Theories, systems and techniques have been combined to formulate a progressive approach to working with clumsy children. In general, classroom teachers may not be particularly concerned with children who display physical clumsiness. There concern lies mainly with academic success. If the child has succeeded in sit-down activities necessary in the classroom environment, little attention may be given to a failure at play. Only when a child displays some abnormal behaviour such as aggression or a withdrawal from social situations do teachers tend to become concerned. However, most teachers become easily concerned if a child displays difficulty in writing or performing other classroom motor tasks. These are some of the educational approaches that I would consult whilst teaching in my class in the hope that I would go part way to rectifying the problems mentioned above.

Educational Approaches.

MARIA MONTESSORI.

"The Montessori approach is one that is based on self development and self teaching in an environment that is specially prepared by the teacher for the optimum growth of the child". (Arnhem, Sinclair 1975)
A multisensory approach to learning provides a great variety of activities. Self education is encouraged; the child learns at his own pace in his own way, with out being compared to other children. Learning should be approached through all of the child's senses.

JEAN PIAGET.

"Piaget considers operational intelligence as unique to humans and the sensory-motor stage as underlying all operational intelligence" (Furth 1970)
A teacher that realises that a child has had inadequate experience at the sensory-motor level may suspect that the child may have difficulties in making adaptions to the demands of the immediate environment.

B.F. SKINNER.

"From skinner's experiments it was discovered that behaviour can be altered and undesirable behaviour characteristics extinguished by suitable rewards." (Arnhem, Sinclair 1975)
Skinner developed the concept of operant conditioning other terms given to this are positive and negative reinforcement and behaviour shaping. His work has particular importance to the teacher who desires to make changes movement behaviour. I used these techniques over a period of six weeks with a group of 13-14 year old males with behaviorism difficulties. At the end of these six weeks I found their general attitude to work improved resulting in neater written assignments handed in. Their behaviour pattern was also slightly modified.
RUDOLF LABAN. (Movement Education)

Thorton (1971) describes the philosophy of Laban under seven headings.
1) The significance of movement in the life of man.
2) Harmony in nature and man.
3) Natural rhythm.
4) The creative influence in the Universe and man.
5) Art as a creative force.
6) Movement, effect and communication.
7) Conflict.

To Laban movement is the way a person gains knowledge about the world and himself. The inner impulse causing movement Laban called EFFORT, which he divided into four basic areas,

Space; This section is not concerned where we move but how we move. Movement may attack the air around the body; the limbs may cut through the space; perhaps indulge in space filling air with movements, taking winding, flexible paths.

Weight; Movements may involve a great deal of muscular tension and be powerful and firm; they may involve much less tension and be delicate, showing fine touch. If a movement is heavy it involves very little tension; the body simply flops about.

Time; Movements may be quick or slow, they may be sudden or sustained; they may be restless or unhurried. Movement may accelerate or decelerate.

Flow; A movement may be freely flowing, giving the sensation of going on and on, or it may be bound, that is capable of being stopped at any moment.

A combination of these movements can be used as a basis for teaching movement. The eight basic combinations, known as "EFFORTS", were described by Laban as the following;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
<th>SPACE</th>
<th>EFFORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quick</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>THRUST.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>SLASH.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>FLICK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>DAB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>FLOAT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>GLIDE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>PRESS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>WRING</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Laban's theory stresses free and individualised movement, moving away from structured movement that is commonly associated with traditional physical education.

"The clumsy child is one who has motor learning difficulties and displays asynchronous and ineffectual motor behaviour, when attempting to carry out movement tasks, that he/she would commonly be expected to accomplish under reasonable circumstances" (Arnheim, Sinclair. 1975)

It is very easy to label pupils. What if a child with motor problems is perfectly well adjusted and doing well academically? To withdraw this child from the class for special movement training may cause an adverse effect on their development. Care must always be taken to ensure that intervention is not interfering in the normal development of the child.

Briefly we must remember there are two main areas for pupils with motor difficulties to fall into;

1) Pupils with academic learning problems as well as motor problems.

2) Pupils that have motor problems but no apparent academic learning problems.

Obtaining skilled movement involves an intricate weaving of psychological and physiological components. A persona movement ability may be compared against standards which are not typical for the specific population in which he might normally function, "the problem of motor impairment is one that has been created by the demands made upon an individual to learn certain skills that are regarded as important, or at least desirable from a normal development point of view" (Morris and Whiting 1971)

Identifying children with motor difficulties.

1. Are the childs movements awkward, ungainly or cumbersome.
2. Is the child always slow to move.
3. Does the child frequently bump into people.
4. Does the child frequently drop things.
5. Does the child have difficulty with his/her balance or balancing items.
6. Does the child often fall over.
7. Does the child show lack of movement skill.
8. Is their muscular development unable to support their bulk.

Obviously this is a subjective identification of a "clumsy" child. Although it could be these observed problems that lead a child on to further tests if required. Other symptoms with are readily observed may manifest themselves in the form of behavioral problems, attention seeking, disruptive or withdrawn actions. "He is described by other children, who will not play with him, as 'no fun' (Arheim and Sinclair 1975) due to the inability of the child to play.
PERCEPTUAL MOTOR PROGRAMME.

Based on Study of Prospect Bank Primary School.

Edinburgh
The following information taken from observations at Prospect Bank Primary School, Leith and with help from S. Peterson a teacher at this school. It shows the most common areas of difficulty I found in these children, and the practical effects of those difficulties in the classroom. Understanding why a child behaves as he does is the first step towards helping him modify his behaviour, and perhaps helps the class teacher too. I found that these children often had additional learning difficulties and emotional problems.

1. Gross motor skills difficulties.
   - Immature body awareness
   - Poor balance
   - Poor Basic body control
   - Immature hand/eve co-ordination
   - Left/right confusion

6.5 years - 7.5 years of age.


9 years of age.

Still generally clumsy and poor at P.E. May try to avoid doing P.E. - slow, forgets kit, gets excluded through bad behaviour from the class. Still may not be able to name and identify body parts. Cannot conform to classroom organisation. General lack of control and poor concentration. Still interferes with other children's work. Poor catching, throwing skills. Tends to chew pencil etc. May be the class "clown" - especially in new situations, or in those he is not sure of himself, prevailing lack of confidence.

2. Fine Motor Ability

6.5 years - 7.5 years of age.

Immature pencil grip, generally described as "ham fisted". Immature handwriting/tracing/copying ability. Difficulty with construction toys, usually will choose not to use them. Cannot use scissors and is generally messy at art work - glue/felt pens. Slow with buttons and zips. Will still have difficulty with dressing. Has difficulty using a knife and fork, this results in a tendency to eat slowly.
9 Years of age.

Generally "ham-fisted" or has developed a bizarre pencil grip. Uses scissors badly and has difficulty with art work. Still has difficulty with dressing and cannot tie shoe laces. Will have a tendency to be a fussy eater.

3. Left/Right Confusion, Poor Spatial Relationships.

6.5 years - 7.5 years.

Will appear hesitant and clumsy in movement resulting in an inability to use space effectively. Will use very large letters when writing and has poor letter formation. May write from right to left. When copying down, letters may be written in any order. There will be a slowness in picking up Mathematical concepts and an inability to/and follow instructions. Overall poor basic learning skills. Generally a lack of confidence.

9 Years of age.

Will appear hesitant in movement and has an inability to judge distance and direction. In writing there may be an over use of capital letters. Continued poor letter formation. This results in a confused ordering of words, missing words out of sentences. Will have difficulty in copying from the blackboard. Confuses left and right visual perceptions will become worse. Poor Mathematical perceptions, organisational abilities and general learning skills. Inability to follow and/or remember instruction. Generally lacks confidence.

4. Lack of Concentration, Easily distracted.

6.5 years - 9 years of age.

Lack of body control generally. Will respond to all stimuli internally and externally. Has not yet learned to pick out and pay attention to the important stimulus. The child will often day dream but will respond positively in a one to one basis or in a very small group.
5. Increased frustration.
   Very little confidence.
   Very low self esteem.
   Poor self image.

6.5 years - 9 years of age.

This child needs constant and continual reassurance. Will have a tendency to show off in a group. Will appear verbally confident. This problem becomes increasingly more apparent as the child gets older. This will develop into inappropriate behaviour generally.

This is an observation of what a teacher may expect from a pupil suffering from various motor difficulties. Prospect bank Primary School is a school for children with special needs, obviously the motor difficulties will be more acute. Although these difficulties will show in pupils in "main stream" education to perhaps a lesser extent. With such difficulties as these children display, it is not enough to allow only a restricted period of time per week to develop their motor skills. Drama is used cross-curricular in this school as it allows a more movement based approach to learning. It also allows the children to experiment with language and movement in an interactive and enjoyable atmosphere. I observed the children in varied lessons that integrated drama techniques. The children were responsive and gained great enjoyment from this play-based learning.
PERCEPTUAL MOTOR PROGRAMME MODEL

Five Basic Senses

LANGUAGE

Processing

Perceiving

Translating

Acting

Problem Solving

Listening

Rhythm

E/H/F

Space Awareness

Movement

Balance

Visual

Body Image

Memory

Body Control

Physical Ed Skills

Confidence

Laterality

Extended Language Perception Experiences

Better Total Perf

Oracy

Writing

Reading

Spelling

Music

Written Expression

Physical Ed Skills

Confidence

Laterality

Body Control

Memory

Body Image

Balance

Space Awareness

Movement

E/H/F

Rhythm

Listening

Problem Solving

Five Basic Senses

LANGUAGE

Processing

Perceiving

Translating

Acting
SKILL AREAS DEFINED.

AREAS FROM THE INNER CIRCLE OF THE P.M.P. MODEL.

1. LOCOMOTION.
Locomotion is the ability to get the body from one point to another in the most appropriate and efficient way whether it be running, hopping, skipping, jumping, swimming, sliding, swinging etc. The more automatic these movements are the less they will interfere with the purpose of the movement from one place to the next. The child with poor locomotion skills often spends so much time getting from one place to another that the reason for the movement is frequently lost as he becomes side tracked and frustrated.

2. BALANCE.
Balance is the ability to maintain equilibrium in whatever position we find ourselves. It is the internal knowledge of where our centre of gravity is and the ability to adjust our bodies to maintain this equilibrium using our sense of laterality. Children with poor balance have difficulty finding a comfortable sitting position or standing position. They fidget and continually shift their positions thus spending a lot of valuable time trying to balance themselves to the detriment of the time spent on the cognitive task.

3. FITNESS.
Fitness refers to the attribute of joint flexibility, muscular strength, endurance and stamina. Children who are not fit spend valuable time concerning themselves with the way they feel rather than concentrating on the task in hand.

4. EYE/HAND   EYE/FOOT   CO-ORDINATION.
The ability to make the hands and feet do what the eyes tell them to do. Eye/foot co-ordination is essential for most gross motor movements. Eye/hand co-ordination is essential for all fine motor movement including writing, manipulation of equipment etc. Children with poor eye/hand co-ordination have difficulty with writing, cutting, colouring etc.
PERCEPTUAL MOTOR PROGRAMME.

RATIONALE.

Pupils with special educational needs require a broad curriculum within which they can acquire knowledge through experience.
A good motor programme must recognise language development, auditory and visual memory training, problem solving and a readiness for learning.

Perceptual Motor training is a programme which aims to teach the child;
PERCEPTIONS AND UNDERSTANDING
of him/herself and the environment through
MOVEMENT / MOTOR EXPERIENCES.

This in turn will be used to teach perceptions of
* time and space
* the pattern and the order of the world around.
* the limitations that govern the human body.

Perceptual Motor training is considered an important part of a child's education in school. It is not a physical programme alone. It is a programme that endeavours to teach PERCEPTIONS. Drama can be used as a useful medium in which to practise this kind of training programme.
PERCEPTUAL MOTOR PROGRAMME.

AIMS.

1) To facilitate the development of skills through graded activities.

2) To develop through movement, the areas of hand/eye, hand/foot co-ordination; locomotion; balance and fitness.

3) To interact with the environment to develop laterality, space and body awareness, body rhythm, body image, control and directionality.

4) To develop motor skills that are related to the child's needs.

5) To develop in the child the ability to process and interpret visual information within his/her memory span.

6) To develop the social skills of sharing, participating with, assisting and caring for other people.

7) To develop self confidence and trust in peers, adults and use of general equipment.

8) To develop problem solving skills and decision making skills, both individually and as part of a group.
7.

LESSON PLANS.

DRAMA

PRIMARY SCHOOL.
PRIMARY SCHOOL

LESSON PLAN

EXAMPLE ; Based on Treasure Island.

Language Based.

1. Warm up. - Solo.........................Children land on island. Explore the jungle area. Swim in the sea. It is a very hot day.

QUESTIONS. What does the island look like? Are there any other people living on the island? What do they look like? What do the animals on land look like? What do the animals in the sea look like? What can you eat on the island? Where will you live?

2. Pairs.................................... You discover an old map on the island. It guides you to hidden treasure. Hunt for the treasure, start digging, discover a box.

QUESTIONS. How did the map get there? Who owns the map? How can you find the treasure? What can you dig with? What does the box look like? What do you think is in the box?

3. Pairs..................................... Two other members of the crew see the pair with the map digging. They go and investigate.

QUESTIONS What do you think the couple with the map are doing? Why do you want to talk to them? How are you going to approach them? What is your aim for talking to them?

4. Groups.................................... The two approaching crew members want some of the treasure. They help to finish digging the box up. The map holders try and trick the other pair.
QUESTION What happens? finish off the story.

5. Whole class................................Whole group gather round with teacher and tell everyone how their story ended.
6 Solo.....Relaxation......................They all lie down on the island and fall asleep dreaming of how they would spend the treasure.

LISTENING TO MUSIC

Follow Up Work.

Draw a picture of the island or animals or sea animals.

Write a poem/short story of how you came to be on the island.

Draw a map, and mark where the treasure is - Mathematics, scaled map, measure distances etc.

Make or paint treasures you may find in the box.

Write a poem or story about what they would do with the treasure.

Read "Treasure Island" to them
PRIMARY SCHOOL
LESSON PLAN

Example: Bonfire Night.

Movement Based.

1. Warm Up - Solo......................Music and movement. You are a fire, being lit
growing, flickering, getting larger and out of control.

2. Warm Up - Pairs.....................Fireworks. What kind of firework are you? A
rocket, spinning wheel etc.

3. Small Groups.......................Each small group has a different activity.

Children with the guy.

4. Whole Class.........................Set up the scene together. What happens?

This will be mostly all moving to music.

Follow Up work.

Draw a picture of a bonfire/fireworks.

Discuss what happened at the end of the lesson.

Personal Safety

The Story of Guy Fawkes

Improvisation of buying and selling tickets (Mathematics).

Safety of Animals
7.

(20)

LESSON PLANS.

DRAMA

SECONDARY SCHOOL.
LESSON PLAN 1

Secondary School.

Movement and language based.

Stage; Adaptable to any learning stage.

Length of lesson; estimated 1hr - 2hr long.

Theme or topic: The Quest

Aims: To develop Gross Motor Control and co-ordination

To encourage group interaction.

To encourage interaction and trust within the group.

To give the opportunity for problem solving tasks.

To develop confidence and self-esteem

Context: Large group improvisation around The Quest for the Lost Child.

Resources: Music, paper, canes, objects (chairs, tables) use of lighting, use of large space.

Principles of Procedure

Organisational

1. The pupils will be provided with sufficient background information for them to participate effectively.

2. Previous knowledge of pupils difficulties will be requested.

3. The activities will be structured in appropriate groupings.

4. Time will be allocated at the end for reflection.
Proposed procedure.

This lesson will not be the first with the group, a certain amount of Warm Up, Group Building and Trust exercises will have been used as a foundation for this lesson.

1. Story

This land is in immediate danger. There is an evil force threatening our land. The ruler of this land has been kidnapped by this force. As you know our ruler is a child and has lost the ability to talk or hear, so we must be very worried for his safety. He has on him, unknown to the evil force, a piece of paper with a code message. Only we can decode this message. This message is the only thing that will save this land from destruction.

Our mission is to find the child, for he needs our help and decode the message and rescue our land

(The fact that I am giving them a new land to explore will extend their imaginations. The use of the small child is that the group should work together to protect and rescue the child. I will act as the leader at first until the group has started to take direction.)

QUESTIONS

Where is our land?

Where is the land to which we have to journey?

What are our people like?

Why is a small child ruling?

Who or What is the evil force?
2. Do you think you are brave and trustworthy to join the mission?

Skills are tested by members of the group.

Everyone has to think of three good things about themselves that they could add to the group.

What kind of skills would we need?

The idea of a challenge has been set up, this is a good point to observe any areas of difficulty within the group. Although everyone will pass the "test" to join the group. Positive reinforcement will be used at all times.

QUESTIONS

Now we have our group who is the leader?

What will we need for the journey?

What is the mode of transport?

What clothes will we wear?

I explain that I am their Guardian Angel, I will be going with them and I can be called upon when they are in difficulty. (Non-failure clause)

QUESTIONS

Are you scared?

What will you be leaving behind?

I will inform them we have an early start tomorrow so we must get to sleep.

RELAXATION WITH MUSIC.

FOLLOW UP WORK

Write a letter describing your feelings before you leave to your family/friends.

Paint a picture of the new land.
Devise a chant to scare away the evil force.

Movement based lesson, music plays while you explore the new land.

Act the whole story out.

What happens in the end of the story

Decode the message

Celebration or Destruction dance.

Stage fighting skills

Discussion, etc.

This whole theme would be used over a period of 4-5 weeks at one lesson a week.
8. WHY DRAMA?

"Drama is a pupil based activity focusing on the individual response and development. In drama, pupils are engaged in a collective enquiry and exploration. Learning occurs through co-operation, participation and interaction. At the centre of all drama work are relationships; between people, between people and ideas, between people and the environment. By acting out roles and situations, pupils gain a greater understanding and knowledge of real-life issues, events, situations and relationships. This interaction contributes to the quality of our lives and to a large extent to our knowledge of ourselves." (S.E.B.)

Educational Drama has its origins in children's play. Many children that have missed out in vital play in their younger years, can through using drama techniques recapture many of the missing experiences. In drama children are required to enquire, negotiate, discover, create, focus, select. Therefore drama could be classified as a cognitive activity. Drama also encourages expression, as children are required to communicate thoughts and feelings to each other, to the teacher and on some occasions to an audience. Drama is a social activity as it encourages children to work alone, in pairs, in small groups, in large groups. These groups are constantly being set tasks which involve negotiating, disagreeing, agreeing and sharing. This will help pupils gain a better social education.

But why do we need movement in drama if when in most schools there is a strong physical education programme? Physical education is certainly necessary for any developing child. I suggest that physical education and drama departments should work closer together for the overall movement development of a child's progress.

Free movement, in drama, is a contrast to the traditional methods of physical education (P.E.), in which the teacher explains and demonstrates a skill, then the child repeats it and is evaluated on how competently he uses this skill. Compared with free movement which is about exploring and testing your own body.

"Unlike gymnastics and other forms of physical education, drama is not in any way competitive and there is no element of judgement of performance against other people" (Pailing+Fairbairn)
Dance-drama helps children to understand the nature of communication skills; for gesture as well as speech is a universal method of communication, regardless of colour or creed. Emotion is expressed through the body as much as through sound. If you consider that sports skills are expected to be practised and art techniques experimented with and refined, it seems desirable to provide an opportunity for free improvisation and exploration within drama and movement.

"Dance and drama are creative forms as valid as art, music and literature. Participation in them involves the whole self, the mind as well as the body, and awareness of self is a fundamental part of the education process."(Pailing+Fairbairn)

Drama aids social and motor skills at the same time. Drama should be an important part of Secondary Schools as it captures the element of play-based learning and allows the pupil to practice basic motor skills in a non-competitive environment. Drama allows pupils from mixed ability groupings to work together. Unlike many sports activity it does not have the added disadvantage of segregation of the sexes; boys - football and rugby, girls - hockey and netball. P.E. cannot help but be competitive and the opportunity for failure within that atmosphere is greater for the child. Many children with poor motor difficulties lack high self-esteem because of constant failure. The theories of Skinner and the techniques used in drama, together may build a child's confidence in order that he/she may experiment with movement in a safe and secure environment.
9. TYPES OF MOVEMENT WITHIN DRAMA.

Types of dance improvisation

*Pure improvisation.*

This is defined as "spontaneous, unplanned movement executed primarily for the participants' own satisfaction and enjoyment" (Surgeon)

This movement is unpredictable, unrepeatable and there is an internal focus of evaluation. This can be practised and enjoyed irrespective of the pupils ability as a mover.

*Choreographed Improvisation*

This is defined as "Spontaneous, unplanned movement executed primarily with the intention to choreograph-compose" (Surgeon)

Its purpose is to communicate and in the process the emphasis is upon the interaction between movement, intuition skills and knowledge. Whilst again unpredictable, it is of necessity repeatable and the focus of evaluation is both external and internal.

This kind of movement must try an communicate something to those that are watching.

*Structured Improvisation.*

This form refers to "spontaneous, unplanned movement done with the intention of executing a predetermined set task and / or solving a given problem." (Surgeon)
Emphasis is on the relationship between the stimulus and the bodies' vocabulary. This movement is predictable, generally unrepealable and has an external focus of evaluation.

MIME

"Mime introduces the spectator to the realities of the inner life - It is the representation of inner movement, of feeling and thinking, by outer and viable movements" (Laban1967).

I believe that every one has a bit of an artist in them, if they are only allowed to find it and that artist expression needs to be a part of every day life. Mime has a place in this

"Gesture and expressive movements are born from the natural instincts of humanity" (Methuen1960)

If we start from that premise, then to express one's feelings through mime is natural and satisfying as playing any active game. We all mime, at a simple level, all the time, whether or not we are aware of it, and it only becomes unnatural when the instinct has been repressed.

Topics;

Mime and the mask

Mime and the Shadow theatre

Mime and ritual

Mime and poetry
I especially like the description of mime given by Claude Kipnis,

"The 'outer' world contains objects, people, animals, organic life of all sorts, the sum and significance of our environment. The 'inner' world consists of our feelings, thoughts impulses and dreams. The art of Mime begins where and when these two worlds meet" 

RELAXATION.

Tension Release

This is a very under used area in many schools. Not only many pupils would benefit from using these techniques but teachers as well.

A prerequisite to good body co-ordination and control is the ability to contract and relax muscles at will. This differential relaxation allows for co-ordinated and efficient movement without fatigue.

Muscle tension reducing techniques.

*Imagery*

*Rhythmical activity*

*play until physically tired*

*Muscle stretching exercises.*

The most lasting approach is conscious tension reduction as suggested by Jacobson (1938) Jacobson first teaches the pupil to be fully aware of excess tension and then to reduce it by focusing on relaxing that tension.
"What It's Like To Be Me" - Edited by Helen Exley.

Written by Disabled Children.

I'm proud to be me. I like to be honest and be truthful. I wish people could accept me for who I am. If I liked school and liked all the teachers, it would be a whole lot easier than now. I just can't get along with other people, I can't talk to them as easy as I can some others. I like my friends to talk to me and love me, I love them and care for them. But people don't seem to care for me. I would like to have more patience with myself and more with other people. I am proud of being me - Shirley
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