



The Creative Dramatics Cookbook: Recipes for Playmaking

Curriculum Unit 90.02.01
by Kelley O'Rourke

Introduction

First, you need a space where anything can happen. Next, you need a group of children that is ready, willing and able. Mix these two ingredients together. Choose and blend in gently the appropriate theater games, acting exercises, and playmaking activities. Select the best dramatic stories, poems and plays. Add some magic with a sense of wonder and imagination. Stir all these ingredients together carefully. Let them steep for thirty to forty-five minutes. At the end of this improvisational cooking time you will have a one-of-a-kind dramatic meal and your very own recipes for playmaking with children.

This curriculum unit is structured like a cookbook of sorts, *The Creative Dramatics Cookbooks*, with six recipes included for playmaking. The recipe above is fanciful though truthful in its essence. Within this unit I will share with the reader some of the real and specific theater techniques I have made my own as I have been a drama teacher for the past fifteen years. My recipes will contain the truthful elements found in the opening recipe, but they will also be grounded in reality and filled with tried and true procedures for playmaking. These playmaking procedures will consist of stories from the oral tradition, theater games, acting exercises, improvisational activities, and rehearsal techniques. The recipes begin with simple skills that gradually build to an all encompassing story theater-type production.

I am a drama specialist in the Comprehensive Arts Program of the New Haven Public Schools. I teach drama workshops, comprised of at least six sessions, in a varying number of elementary school classrooms all around the city and throughout the school year. My workshops allow me to use my talents in storytelling, puppetry, improvisational theater, and playmaking. I also facilitate the seventh and eighth grade Dance-Drama Electives Program in the middle schools.

This curriculum unit cookbook will document my approach to teaching drama in the elementary school classroom. I feel a personal need to organize and assess my teaching techniques as it has been many years since I was trained and first began using improvisational theater techniques to teach children. In this cookbook I have compiled and shared those lessons or recipes I found to be both unique and successful. I hope *The Creative Dramatics Cookbook: Recipes for Playmaking* will meet my need to document my work while it also meets the classroom needs of other teachers.

Drama techniques can be used in any age or level of classroom, though I have seen them work most

successfully with younger children. This unit is designed for teachers to use in their elementary school classrooms, grades K-5, though it could be easily adapted for use with middle or high school students. The teaching techniques used in drama are basically the same for all ages. It is the approach and the dramatic literature used that is most often different.

Elementary school children are very open and receptive to the techniques of theater and dramatic play because their own natural play and developmental stage of growth is similar in structure. Introducing theater games and techniques to these children is a joy because they are so eager to meet challenges and to take risks. The challenge for the teacher of the acting games and theater exercise, is that in using “adult” rules and goals to guide the students through their own creative process, the teacher must be cautious and not too intrusive in the leadership role. The teacher must be able to step in and out of the group and at times must be on an equal footing with the children as they play. To do this a teacher must select drama activities that are tried and true and will build her confidence as a leader while her students are learning to explore their inner and outer worlds both creatively and constructively.

Classroom creative dramatics activities and theater techniques allow both the teacher and the student a wide variety of opportunities to explore the academic world. Drama activities can be used to teach social studies, reading, literature, science, art, music, or any subject taught in the elementary school classroom. Drama activities can also deal with the social issues, e.g., AIDS awareness, sex education, drug use, and decision making, that are now such an important part of today’s curriculum. *The Creative Dramatics Cookbook: Recipes for Playmaking* is structured so that teachers may pick and choose a specific activity or the complete lesson they feel will best suit their classroom needs.

Goals and Objectives

My goals and objectives in teaching this unit are as follows:

1. To use theater techniques to introduce students to the world of drama.
 - a. acting exercises
 - b. theater games
 - c. improvisation
 - d. playmaking
 - e. performance
2. To encourage students to become more aware of self through drama activities.
 - a. inner self
(thoughts, ideas, opinions)
 - b. outer self
(in relation to others—spatially, emotionally)
3. To encourage students to become more expressive in a verbal and in a non-verbal manner through drama activities.
 - a. oral language
 - b. written language
 - c. non-verbal communication
4. To give students the opportunity to work as equal members of a creative group.
 - a. as individuals
 - b. in pairs
 - c. in small and large groups

5. To take students through an ongoing, organic, and developmentally graduating theater process.
 - a. introduction to acting and theater games
 - b. rehearsal process
 - d. performance
6. To introduce students to the art of storytelling.
 - a. as listeners
 - b. as narrators and storytellers
7. To introduce students to the literature of the oral tradition.
 - a. fairy tales
 - b. folk tales
 - c. myths
 - d. legends
8. To use this “literature” as the foundation for playmaking.
9. To connect drama to and integrate it into the academic curriculum.
 - a. language arts
(reading, writing, listening, literature, vocabulary)
 - b. social studies
(geography, sociology, anthropology, history)
 - c. social development
(AIDS awareness, drug education, sex education, decision making)
10. To share with other colleagues a simple, yet comprehensive short-term drama unit that can easily be adapted for use in almost any area of the elementary school academic curriculum.

Strategies As I have already mentioned, I think that every teacher can make drama an integral part of her classroom. It is an art form based on collaboration and cooperation. It is flexible in its form and style. There are many types of drama and many ways in which to approach it in the classroom. Drama techniques can be used to encourage children to think creatively and for themselves. Drama is an artistic way of problem solving. As teachers we are always being told to teach our students to think for themselves. Drama is a very real solution to this problem.

All too often, though, classroom teachers are not introduced to theater techniques during their education and they do not feel comfortable using them without the assistance of an arts teacher. I have created this unit so that the average classroom teacher will be able to use these lessons comfortably and successfully in introducing her students to creative dramatics and playmaking. I hope the teacher will use these techniques as they suit her individual needs. These lessons are tried and true. I have refined them over this past year, though some of the stories and games I have taught to students for years. These “recipes” are my old friends. I am now sharing them with others with the hope that they will help my colleagues use theater techniques in their classrooms to teach not only the art of drama, but academic subjects such as reading and social studies as well.

RECIPE #1

This lesson serves as an introduction to the drama workshop. I use it every time I enter a new teaching situation. *A Story, A Story* by Gail E. Haley is an old African folk tale picture book about Ananse, the spider man, and how he buys the Sky God’s stories. There are no stories on earth to hear until Ananse finds the three items the Sky God demands: Osebo, the leopard of the terrible teeth, Mmboro, the hornets that sting like fire, and Mmoatia, the fairy that men never see. Once the Sky God is presented with these creatures he gives Ananse his golden box of stories. Ananse takes the stories back to the earth and as soon as he opens the golden box all the stories fly out and scatter to the corners of the world.

I like to begin my sessions with this story as it is inherently dramatic. It has a solid structure for playmaking with its strong hero, colorful characters, vivid setting, and trickster-style conflicts. I also like the tone it sets as it is a story about where stories come from and I feel all playmaking is based on the “story.”

I do not ask students to stand up and improvise a playlet for the first three or four sessions. Teachers may choose to come back to this tale and to dramatize it after they have played the theater games I feel are a vital and necessary foundation for playmaking. *A Story, A Story* makes a very interesting play and can be charming when it is produced for an audience with lots of choreographed movement, bright costumes, and vivid sets.

First, I read or tell the story to the children. Whenever possible tell the story to your students. It sets a nice tone and immediately makes drama time different. Telling a story to your students will boost your confidence if you begin simply. Hearing a story told rather than read will be a special experience for the students. It makes the teacher seem a little more human as she is now seen as a performer too. It is unfair to always ask the children to perform without being willing to do so yourself. A dramatic reading will suffice though if you are not yet ready to be a storyteller.

After telling the story I talk to the students about their five senses and how important the use of their five senses is in acting. We discuss what drama is and how it is different than and similar to art and music, two art forms they are usually familiar with. Then we begin to work with the sense of hearing, playing the simple game, “Listen to the Environment.” Everyone closes his or her eyes and listens to the sounds within and outside the school space. Afterwards a list is made of all the different sounds. The students first discuss the types of sounds heard in the school or in Ananse’s jungle. Cued by the teacher they repeat these sounds while

pretending to be an “Orchestra.” The teacher serves as a conductor directing this sound orchestra to be loud, soft, fast, slow, etc.

Another “hearing” game that is fun to play is “Telephone.” The teacher whispers a message into the first child’s ear. This is passed until the last child stands up and says the message out loud. If during the passing of the message a child does not understand what he is being told he may say, “Operator” up to three times so that the message may be repeated until it is understood. After three unsuccessful tries there is a “broken connection” and the game must begin again. It is the goal of this game to have the message repeated exactly. It is fun to discuss why that rarely happens. Again this takes us back to storytelling and the almost Jungian universal consciousness found in the stories of the oral tradition.

I feel it is very important to begin drama sessions with stories from the oral tradition. These stories are primal and common to all human beings. It is essential that young children are exposed to folk and fairy tales as well as myths and legends. These ancient stories have lessons to be taught that can be found in no other type of literature. The lessons are universal and best learned when one is young. Psychologists such as Bruno Bettelheim and Carl Jung felt that folk and fairy tales are filled with deep, natural truths. Bettelheim wrote about his theories in *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. Bettelheim felt that children could use the symbols and characters found in fairy tales to explain their own inner turmoil and emotions. Stories from the oral tradition educate, liberate, and support the feelings of children. Drama performs the same task. If the reader is interested in pursuing this topic of how drama and folk tales have a psychological meaning for the children they should look at my unit and the unit written by Bill Derry in the 1984 YNTI “Oral Traditions” seminar.

A drama session should last for approximately forty-five minutes. This lesson should end at this point. If there is time left the teacher may choose to play the game “Three Changes” (See lesson plans) which stresses the sense of sight and the skill of observation. *A Story, A Story* also lends itself to the use of creative movement because the animal characters in the story would have such interesting and exotic movement patterns. The teacher may want to push aside the desks and try some of the movement activities found in *Bananas* listed in the teacher’s bibliography, such as “Earth, Sea, and Sky” or the “Detective Walk.” You may choose to simply ask the children to move through space in a variety of ways (e.g., fast, slow, weightless, flying, crawling, swimming, walking on hot sand, swimming in cold water up to your waist, walking on jello) and then proceed to asking the children to move like the characters in the story (e.g., the spider man, the Sky God, the leopard, the hornets, the gum baby, the fairy). The movement session might end by asking the children to pretend to be one of the stories in the golden box and to fly back to their seats. “Freeze” is a very important word and a concept that must be stressed when doing creative movement. When coached to “freeze,” children stop all action, holding their pose. Rules about personal space are vital and must be stressed before and throughout the session. The children need to understand their own sense of personal space and how they can move in a positive, creative, and non-chaotic manner.

RECIPE #2

This lesson works with the literary and dramatic theme of transformation using the Greek myth of Pygmalion to set the scene. I have formulated my own oral version of Pygmalion, but there is an excellent retelling for young people that can be found in *Heroes and Monsters of Greek Myths* by Bernard Evslin, Dorothy Evslin, and Ned Hoopes. I teach this same lesson using *The Gingerbread Boy* for children in grades K-2 as the myth of Pygmalion can be a little too challenging for small children. The theme I stress is the same. Both stories are about the molding, shaping, and creating of an inanimate object by human hands that is then brought to life by an act of fate.

After I tell the story, the students and I discuss Pygmalion's role as a sculptor. We look at him as an artist and we discuss the artist that is inside everyone. Through the following activities we attempt to become dramatic sculptors and to transform ourselves and one another through creative movement activities. First, we play the theater game "Clay" which is also known as "Statues" or "Sculptures" (See lesson plans). This game is an almost perfect theater game. It asks the players to trust each other and to work together both emotionally and physically.

One child pretends to be a piece of clay. The other children take turns gently moving and molding the clay into new positions.

The teacher must create an atmosphere of respect asking the children to work slowly, to not move the clay in a manner that is awkward or embarrassing, and to stress that this game will not work if the players cannot trust each other. The children are now acting as they transform themselves and their classmates into sculptures. The game of "Clay" can be played an infinite number of times as there are many variations on it. The teacher may ask the sculptures to freeze as they touch the clay and to then become part of the statue. It may be played in pairs or in small groups. The actors may become both the clay and the sculptor as they join in one at a time freezing and creating a sculpture that depicts a certain emotion or activity.

"Clay" is always stimulating as it is an activity filled with a true theater essential, an actor working within an ensemble creating a dramatic product from the performers themselves. In the variation "Dancing Diamonds" the players work in a small group where each player has an assigned number. When the teacher calls an actor's number he goes into the open space and freezes himself in a dramatic position. As other numbers are called the players fill out the sculpture. When the player's number is called a second time he leaves the sculpture. Since the numbers are constantly being called a player must stay alert and the sculpture is always changing. The actors are joining in and then exiting as their number cue is called.

This lesson based on Pygmalion must be divided into two sessions to keep within the forty-five minute time limit. The first session is spent sharing the story of Pygmalion and working on the game of "Clay" and some of its variations. The second session continues to work with the concept of transformation as the students are introduced to three new activities: "Mirrors" "Partners Statues," and "Two Sticks."

RECIPE #3

"Mirrors" is a classic theater game that asks the player to transform himself into the mirror image of his partner. However his partner moves the mirror must copy the same movements to the best of his ability. Learning to act means learning how to be a member of an ensemble, how to be a part of a whole. It also means learning to use all of your senses along with your intellect and imagination. Theater games like "Clay" and "Mirrors" demand that the actor use his own natural talents to solve the game's problem. He must also meet the challenge while relating to others facing the same task. The playing of these theater games not only develops the actor within a child, but also teaches him lessons that are important in other areas of life. For example, how to use inner resources to meet life's demands or how to work constructively as a group member.

There are many variations to the theater game, "Mirrors." I ask my students to work in pairs silently with one partner following the other. They must move in slow motion and they must maintain eye contact. I sidecoach them through this activity as I do during all my classroom sessions. I move around the room making comments, sometimes to an individual quietly or sometimes to the entire group. I ask the students to first focus on the upper half of the body and to keep their feet still and in one place. I will play quiet "new age" style music to help the players concentrate. Every few minutes I call out, "Switch," which means that the

person playing the mirror now becomes the leader and vice-versa. I might ask the group to stop and watch certain pairs as they work. I also might ask them to mirror me or just one child who will lead the entire group.

From the mirror activity I move the group into the “Partner Statues” game where they stay in the same pairings. One person is the clay and the other is the sculptor. The sculptor creates a statue out of the clay and gives it a title. Then the sculptors share their titles as they walk through our make-believe gallery. We finally switch so that each player gets a turn to be both sculptor and statue.

After “Partner Statues” we play one last transformation game. In the previous games the students were asked as actors to transform themselves, their own bodies. Now they will be asked to take an object, a prop, and to transform it. I introduce “Two Sticks” by referring back to Pygmalion and how as a sculptor he used his imagination to create art out of clay, bronze, marble, and wood. The students will now be asked to use their imaginations and a bit of pantomime to create as many objects as possible out of two simple, wooden dowel-type sticks. I demonstrate the game to the class by using the sticks in two or three different ways. I use them as a rabbit’s ears, knitting needles, weights, or a violin and its bow. There are hundreds of ways to use the sticks as they can appear to grow smaller or larger or as they take on different shapes. The key to guessing what the sticks are is in how well they are used and clearly manipulated. I ask for volunteers and after a few people have shared their ideas (e.g. skis, chopsticks, a hammer and a nail, a comb and a mirror) the sticks are passed around the room until everyone has had several turns.

The theater games played up to this point have all had a different, yet similar focus. They have asked the students to solve several problems: how to use their sense of hearing or sense of sight to its maximum potential; to be observant; to use the body in specific patterns of movements like an animal or with a certain human quality; to touch others and to allow oneself to be touched; to work successfully as a partner or as a group-member; to create new objects out of unusual raw materials such as the human body or two sticks. The next few sessions will build on these basic acting skills by asking the students to become specific characters in a story’s plot. To do that the students will have to use their imaginations and their abilities to listen, observe, and to transform themselves and their surroundings into the world of folk and fairy tales.

RECIPE #4

This session begins with a simple verbal and physical warm-up that can be used to start the remaining sessions. The students should be directed to find a small personal space in which they can move freely and unrestricted. Next to his or her desk is usually just fine. The students will first be asked to reach up towards the ceiling and to slowly bend out and over until they are almost touching their toes with their knees bent. Next, they should be told to roll up using their spine like a snake’s. This exercise is repeated several times. Following this I ask the students to do a good shake-out starting as they are told to wiggle their fingers, then their hands, their arms, their shoulders, their chests, their heads, their hips, their legs, their knees, their ankles, and finally their feet until they are wiggling everything. They should wiggle loosely, not too hard, for a moment or two until I ask them to freeze. This exercise is then repeated several times.

For the final warm-up I speak out loud two rhyming poems, “Put Your Hands Up in the Air” and “The Alphabet Song” (See lesson plans). The children join me in the actions stated in the poems and when possible speaking the rhymes out loud.

Now that the group is warmed up I tell them the story of *The Three Bears*. I try to make it as dramatic as possible using clever voices and lots of gestures. I have chosen this story to begin playmaking with because it is a story that every child knows. It can be easily broken down into scenes with the simple, yet interesting pattern of dialogue. Young children love this story as it is appropriate to their age. Older students love to act

out this story because it is so familiar, allowing them to concentrate on the more difficult challenge of characterization because they already know the plot and dialogue. *The Three Bears* gives all ages of children the opportunity to act in a comic manner as they growl like a bear or act like a spoiled child.

After telling the story I set up three different sized chairs at the front of the room in what will be the stage space. I act as the narrator which allows me the opportunity to sidecoach. I pause for the actors when there is dialogue and as the narrator I am one of the players too. As the narrator I am seen by the children as an actor, which is important if I am to be part of their ensemble and not just the teacher. As the narrator I am also able to serve as a director casting the play and assisting the actors with their blocking and dialogue. With each scene we switch actors so that every child will get the chance to be onstage as either Goldilocks or as one of the three bears. I encourage the children to ham it up a bit and to have lots of fun with these stereotypical fairy tale characters. This makes the first playmaking acting experience nonthreatening and provides a foundation to be built upon during the last two sessions which will offer more challenging stories for playmaking.

RECIPE #5

This session is centered around a folk tale, *The Fat Cat*, which I have adapted from several sources and which I will send you upon request. *The Fat Cat* has the elements a teacher must look for when choosing stories for playmaking. It has rich, comical characters that are fun to portray. It has a simple repetitive plot that builds to a climax with a happy ending. There is a wonderful villain to be found in the fat cat who is so heartless that he eats his best friend the parrot and so greedy that he eats half of the town. The heroes of the story are two charming, little sand crabs that the children will identify with since they often feel overwhelmed by the large, powerful adults around them.

The warm-up for this session could be a repeat of the last session's physical warm-up or in an attempt to connect to some of the literary themes in *The Fat Cat* (e.g., overcrowding, working together to solve a problem) the teacher might choose the games of "Knots" (See lesson plans) or Viola Spolin's "Machines" or "Tug-of-War." These games all deal with people joining together to create a solution (machine) or to wrestle with the problem of being pushed, pulled, or tied up in knots (knots, tug-of-war) which is how all of the characters feel when they wind up in the cat's stomach. "Machine" could be used to help with the blocking of how the cat's character might be physically maneuvered onstage after eating so many characters.

The Fat Cat is a good choice for playmaking because it can involve an entire class in its cast list. You might choose to alternate children as the cat and parrot to give as many children as possible a chance to play these popular characters. The teacher should again act as the narrator stopping to cast just before each scene begins. This way there is almost always an audience. This is important because as the cat eats each new creature everyone should shout the refrain, "Slip, slop, gobb1e." The person who has just been eaten attaches to the cat by putting his hands on the shoulders of the person in front of him. This way the cat really grows as he becomes fatter. As the story continues the "cat" may fill the entire classroom so there should be a cleared-out playing space. I have staged this play, though, where the actors moved among the desks and nothing had to be shifted.

When the crabs are finally eaten, the line behind the cat will break apart and the actors should mill around as if they are confined in the cat's stomach. As the crabs "Snip-snap, Snip-snap," each of the characters marches through on the way back to his or her seat. At the end of the play we are left with the lone cat, small again, as he sews up the hole in his coat. Don't forget to let everyone take a bow and to stage a simple curtain call.

I do not discuss much with the children before we begin playmaking. I don't want to influence their acting

choices. I tell the story. We discuss its highlights briefly. I narrate the action and I cast scene by scene. The actors are free to say whatever they choose to and if needed I will sidecoach dialogue and blocking suggestions. In the end the class and teacher can feel proud because their playlet has been a group venture with everyone equally involved.

RECIPE #6

This final lesson repeats the same skills and reinforces the learning achieved in Recipe #5. At this point the teacher may choose to continue this simple playmaking which can be done in one or two forty-five minute sessions or she may want to take a story, create a play, polish it, and perform it for an audience. I think children should have repeated playmaking experiences with a variety of stories presented to them. I would encourage teachers though to make sure their students are confident and comfortable before they are asked to share their work with an audience. A teacher must know her own students and base this type of decision on their needs. A good “first” audience is a friendly class of younger students.

I end these six sessions with the classic fairy tale, *The Golden Goose*. Children identify with the hero, Dummling, as he is an underdog. They like the rich, classic fairy tale characters found in the story. I have chosen *The Golden Goose* because it is similar to *The Fat Cat* though it is a more complex story. The plot’s action is again repetitive. Here everyone is attached to a goose and not part of a cat. There are elements of comedy and tragedy in the story of the golden goose. The cruel parents, lazy brothers, and greedy daughters are all on the dark side while the old man, the princess, and Dummling add important good and comical elements. This story could easily be worked on and turned into a more formalized play presentation.

I would use the same warm-ups as last week since thematically they are still appropriate. It is also a good idea to play a theater game more than once. The children will enjoy it and being familiar with the rules they will most likely stretch themselves a bit and take greater risks. When students are comfortable with the work they can often be more free.

Again, begin by telling the story to the students. Briefly discuss its plot, the characters and their goals. I would cast this story before beginning, adding characters to make sure that each student has a part. I might allow more than once child to play Dummling as he is such a popular character, but there can be any number of daughters, or farmers, or other people who get stuck to the golden goose. This story can be adapted to accommodate any number.

The teacher should again serve as the narrator sidecoaching when necessary. Act the story out scene by scene with the characters attaching themselves to the golden goose in a manner similar to the blocking used in *The Fat Cat*. The teacher might choose to bring in simple costumes or props. The action will again fill the entire classroom so there should be an appropriate space cleared. When the students have finished make sure they each take a bow.

Now that the six drama sessions have been completed it is time to think about the next phase. These recipes provide a teacher with the basics of creative drama teaching techniques. Now she is equipped to make these activities an integral part of her curriculum. The students have discovered the actor within and will be proud of their playmaking. A foundation has been laid so that the classroom teacher can go ahead and pursue further dramatic activities using theater games throughout the curriculum or by staging and presenting simple plays for an audience.

Drama can be used as a powerful classroom tool. There is no art form that is more democratic or as involving. I hope this unit has been helpful in turning your classroom into a stage. I hope the lessons provided here have

been both nourishing and delicious. Bon appetit!

LIST OF INGREDIENTS

Recipe #1

Tell *A Story, A Story* by Gail E. Haley

“Listen to the Environment”

“Orchestra”

“Telephone”

Use creative movement to explore characterization

“Earth, Sea, and Sky” (See *Bananas*

“Detective Walk” (See *Bananas*)

If there is enough time, play “Three Changes”

Recipe #2

Tell *Pygmalion* by Bernard Evslin, Dorothy Evslin, and Ned Hoopes “Clay” and its variations

1. “Freeze” Clay

2. “Group” statues based on feelings or actions

3. “Dancing Diamonds”

Recipe #3

“Mirrors”

“Partner Statues”

“Two Sticks”

Recipe #4

Stretching and shaking warm-ups

“Put Your hands Up in the Air”

“The Alphabet Song”

Tell *The Three Bears*

Act the story out

Recipe #5

“Knots”

“Machine” (See “Part of a Whole, Object” by V. Spolin in *Games for the Classroom: A Teacher’s Handbook*) or *Bananas* “Tug of War” (See “Tug of War” by V. Spolin in *Theater Games for the Classroom: A Teachers Handbook*)

Tell *The Fat Cat*

Act the story out

Recipe #6

Repeat warm-up activities from Recipe #5

Tell *The Golden Goose* by Joanna Cole

Act the story out

LESSON PLANS

The following activities are explained in full detail in the order they are found in the recipes. All other theater games and activities are either explained in the narrative section of this curriculum unit or their source of origin is listed in the “Ingredients.”

Recipe #1

“Three Changes”

Materials None

Time 20 minutes

Goal To develop concentration and powers of observation.

Description Select three student volunteers. Ask them to stand in front of the class. The class members should be told to look at the three students very carefully as they will soon step out into the hall and change three things about their appearance, e.g., push up a sleeve, untie a shoe, take off a watch. The three students should make their changes quickly. When they re-enter the room their classmates will guess the “three changes” one change, one student at a time.

Variation: The students face each other in two lines. Each student has a partner that he observes carefully. The students turn their backs to one another and each makes three changes in their appearances simultaneously. The teacher calls the cue for everyone to turn and face their partner. Taking turns the students guess the three changes that were made by their partners. ***Instead of three changes why not make five changes or even ten. As more changes are made the players are forced to become more creative and inventive.

Recipe #2

“Clay” or “Sculptures”

Materials None

Time 15-30 minutes

Goals

1. To experience the variety of ways in which the human body can be moved and shaped.
2. To learn to work together

Description *The teacher directs all the action. A volunteer is chosen to stand in front of the class and to pretend to be a piece of clay. The person as clay can not talk, walk, wiggle, giggle, or move. One at a time the students come up and gently move and shape the clay moving that person into a statue or sculpture-like position. The teacher may ask a student to freeze as he is touching the clay. He then becomes a piece of clay too and is now part of the whole statue or sculpture. All of this is done in silence.*

Variations *The students may be asked to work in pairs with one person acting as the clay and the other as the sculptor. Or the students may act as both the clay and the sculptor as they build one at a time, a sculpture depicting a specific action or emotion, e.g., The students might create an angry statue wherein each person freezes one at a time connecting to a previous participant and showing their personal interpretation of anger.*

Recipe #3

“Put Your Hands Up in the Air”

“The Alphabet Song”

Materials None

Time 5-10 minutes

Goals *To help the students warm-up their voices and bodies in a coordinated, creative, and fun manner.*

Description *The teacher must learn these rhymes and teach them to the children who can learn them as they do them. Each rhyme is filled with movements, actions, and gestures the children perform as they are speaking the rhymes.*

Put your hands up in the air,

Put your hands on your nose.

Put your hands up in the air,

Bend down and touch your toes.

Everybody turn around.

Let's all jump up and down.

Put your right hand in the air,

Put your right hand on your nose.

Put your left hand in the air,

Bend down and touch your toes.

Everybody turn around.

Let's all jump up and down.

Put your right hand in the air,

Put your right hand on your hips.

Put your left hand in the air.

Put both hands on your hips.

Everybody turn around.

Let's all jump up and down.

Walk back quietly to your seat.

Don't let the teacher hear your feet.

Put your hands in your lap.

Bow your head and take a nap.

Bow your head. . .

And take a nap.

Recipe #4

A...is for arms to stretch out wide, stretch them out from side to side.

B...is for bend that knees can do. Bend your knees in front of you.

C...is for clap your hands up high. Clap them up to the sky.

D...is for down to touch your toes. Up and down, follow your nose.

E...is for eyes and E is for ears. Blink your eyes and wiggle your ears.

F...is for the funny things you do. Hop with one foot in back of you.

G...is for a goose that walks with a waddle. Walk and walk and waddle and waddle.
H...is for hands that you shake. Shake them hard. They won't break.
I...is for the innings in a baseball game. Throw the baseball. Watch your aim.
J...is for Jack all curled up in a box. Pop up when the top unlocks.
K...is for kick your legs to the side, like a bronco cowboy rides.
L...is for laugh and happy you will be. Ha, ha, ha! Hee, hee, hee!
M...is for march in one straight line. March in place and keep your time.
N...is for nose. Now, breathe your best. Take a breathe and fill your chest.
O...is for over the puddle you step. Great big steps or you'll get wet.
P...is for pull your tummy in. Pull it in and in and in.
Q...is for quietly sit in your chair. Now, roar like a big old bear.
R...is for row your boat along. Stretch and pull your arms back strong.
S...is for stand with toes straight ahead, hands on hips, and a proud tall head.
T...is for twist, the dance you do. Twist your knees in front of you.
U...is for up when you look at a star. Bend your head back very far.
V...is for the voice that comes from your mouth. Open your mouth as a big as a house.
W...is for wind the wool up tight. Around your arms with all your might.
X...is for extra strong you'll stay if you do knee bends every day.
Y...is what you say when someone tastes yummy. Pat your head and rub your tummy.
Z...is for zero, the end of our game. We'll play it another day and it will be fun...just the same.

Recipe #5

“Knots”

Materials None

Time 10-15 minutes

Goals To encourage children to work together as they solve a tricky problem.

Description The students should be divided in groups of 5-8 people. The teacher may choose to have several groups work at one time or to allow just one group to work with an audience. This game does overexcite some children so the teacher must be firm in making sure that children follow the rules. If a group cannot solve the problem alone the teacher should feel free to help them out.

The group members begin by standing close to each other in a small circle. They put both hands into the center of the circle and hold onto two different people’s hands until all the hands are jumbled up. When everyone is holding two hands the teacher tells the group to become untangled without once breaking their hands apart, stepping over or going under or doing whatever it takes to come back to a full circle without letting go of each other’s hands. It is rare that a knot can not be untangled. This game demands that people work together, listen to each other, and try to be patient as the knot becomes more tangled before it is untangled.

Student Bibliography

Cole, Joanna. *Best Loved Folk Tales of the World* . Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1983.

This is an excellent collection of folk tales from all over the world. These versions are too difficult for most elementary school students to read, but they will greatly enjoy listening to them. Joanna Cole has included old favorites here such as *The Golden Goose* as well as some rare and unusual tales.

Evslin, Bernard, Evslin, Dorothy, and Hoopes, Ned. *Heroes and Monsters of the Greek Myth* . New York, NY: Scholastic Book Services, 1967.

This collection includes *Pygmalion* and such other myths as the stories of Atalanta, Midas, and Perseus. It is written on a level for older elementary or middle school students. It is a good source for the teacher/storyteller.

Haley, Gail E. *A Story, A Story* . Hartford, CT: Connecticut Printers, Inc., 1970.

This is a wonderful story and a beautiful picture book that middle elementary school students should be able to read for themselves. The simple woodcut illustrations are lovely. It is written in a style that begs the reader to “tell” it out loud.

Johnson, Edna, Sickels Evelyn R., Sayers, Frances Clark, eds. *Anthology of Children’s Literature* . Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970.

In this anthology you will find the story of *The Cat and the Parrot* . This one of the sources I used in creating my own version of *The Fat Cat* . I will supply my retelling to the reader upon request.

Kent, Jack. *The Fat Cat* . New York, NY: Scholastic Book Services, 1971.

This is a picture book version of *The Fat Cat* folk tale. It is similar in structure to my retelling, yet different. Young children can read this version on their own. The three versions of *The Fat Cat* that are available could be used to teach a lesson on how varied one folk tale can be as it is found in different sources.

Scarry, Richard. *Animal Nursery Tales* . New York, NY: Golden Press, 1975.

This book is filled with the stories that young children love: *The Three Bears* , *The Three Little Pigs*, *The Muscians of Bremen* , and many others. Young children can read this book and will enjoy Richard Scarry's illustrations. The teacher/storyteller will find it to be a wonderful resource for these simple tales of childhood.

Teachers Bibliography

Cheifetz, Dan. *Theater in My Head* . Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971.

This is an excellent narrative of one teacher's experience in directing and setting up a drama workshop.

Fluegelman, Andrew, Ed. *More New Games!* Garden City, NY: Dolphin Books, 1976.

This is the first of two books dealing with non-competitive group games. The games though not meant to be artistic often are. The games are very creative and fun to play. They can easily become part of a drama workshop.

Fluegelman, Andrew, Ed. *The New Games Book*. Garden City NY: Dolphin Books, 1981.

The follow-up book to *The New Games Book* . These games can often be used in drama activities as well.

Grenough, Millie, Esdaile, Sharyn, Wolf, Mary Hunter, eds. *Bananas and Fifty-Four Other Varieties: A Book of Activities to do with Kids*. West Haven, CT: Fairfax Press, 1980.

I was one of the authors of this book which was created by the team of artists who taught in the Title VII Arts Program. This Program brought children together from schools all over the New Haven to work with the arts in an interdisciplinary manner. The games and activities described here are excellent for use in the classroom. Copies of the book may be obtained by contacting Keith Cunningham of the Center for Theatre Techniques, c/o the Coop H.S., Dixwell Avenue, New Haven, CT 06511.

McCaslin, Nellie . *Act Now! Plays and Ways to Make Them* . New York, NY: S.G. Phillips, Inc., 1975.

Nellie McCaslin is a major influence in the world of children's theater. This is an excellent book that can be used by both a teacher and her students. Ms. McCaslin explains in a step-by-step manner how to put on a classroom play.

McCaslin, Nellie. *Creative Drama in the Intermediate Grades* . New York, NY: Longman, Inc., 1987.

Ms McCaslin has also written a similar book for the lower elementary grades. This book looks at all the drama activities a teacher might choose to do with children in grades 4, 5 and 6. Storytelling, puppetry, playmaking, poetry, and mime are all explored in this text. I think that this is the one book to purchase if you are thinking of using drama techniques in the classroom.

Spolin, Viola. *Improvisation for the Theater: A Handbook of Teaching and Directing Techniques* . Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1963.

Viola Spolin invented the theater game and this is the first book in which she shared her techniques. It is a classic.

Spolin, Viola. *Theater Games for the Classroom: A Teacher's Handbook*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1986. In this book Viola Spolin shares her games with teachers giving excellent objectives and sharing her philosophies regarding the uses and importance of theater in the classroom. This is another "must have" book.

Spolin, Viola. *Theater Games for Rehearsal: A Director's Handbook* . Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1985. Here Ms. Spolin selects those theater games she feels will most help the theater director. This book can be very useful in the blocking and staging of a play.

Ward, Winifred. *Stories to Dramatize*. Anchorage, KY: The Children's Theatre Press, 1952.

I am afraid this excellent book is out of print, but it is worth a library search. Winifred Ward is the mother of the children's theater movement in the United States. This book shares not only her timeless philosophies, but all of her practical ideas for staging the wonderful stories included in this book.

Way, Brian. *Development Through Drama* . Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1967.

Brian Way is one of the major forces in the English creative drama movement. This is an excellent source book.

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