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**A STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF DRAMA EDUCATION  
ON SOCIAL INTERACTION IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

*By*

*Nevine A. Yassa* ©

*A thesis*

*submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements*

*for the degree of*

*Master of Education*

*in the*

*Faculty of Education*

**LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY  
THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO**



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**Dedicated to my family**

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### **Abstract**

The primary purpose of this qualitative study is to examine high school students' perceptions of being involved in creative drama, and the effect of this involvement on their social interactions. All data was collected, analyzed and interpreted using qualitative research techniques. Interviews and non-participant observations were used for data collection. Participants were selected via purposive sampling, and included two male students, four female students, and three teachers.

Findings of this study provide insights into common attitudes and behaviours in daily interpersonal relatedness among students who are involved in creative drama education. Overall, this study reveals that in many cases, drama education enhances social interaction. Thus, curricularists may be encouraged to integrate drama into a wide range of school subjects such as history, religion, health science, and family studies.

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## **Overview of the Thesis**

This study comprises six chapters. The first chapter examines the background to the study, thus putting the research in context; terms are defined as well as the limitations and assumptions of the study. This is followed by a review of related literature current to the completion of the study in Chapter Two; where recent research in the field is characterized by various approaches to drama education. The design of the research, data collection structures, and the procedures used in collecting and analyzing the data area discussed in Chapter Three. Also included here is a profile of the participants, and a description of the setting in which the study took place. The findings of the research are presented and analyzed in Chapter Four. Finally, Chapter Five outlines the findings, implications and conclusions.

## CHAPTER 1

### Scope and Purpose

#### Introduction

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the effect of drama education on social interaction among high school students in Northwestern Ontario. It is an interpretative study which reveals high school students' perceptions of drama education.

The research was based on qualitative methods, utilizing data from interviews and observations. The process was exploratory and involved interpreting, describing and identifying students' social skills within the context of an interpretative-descriptive process which relies on people's words and meanings as the data for analysis (Belenky, 1992). Data collection was conducted in a naturalistic setting: Observations and interviews were conducted with students in their classrooms (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The research design was emergent, beginning with an initial focus on inquiry that evolved as I engaged in the process of data collection and analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p.64). Inductive analysis was then employed, where I searched the data to reveal significant themes (Patton, 1994, p.40). Based on the texts of Maykut & Morehouse (1994), Bogdan & Biklen (1992) and Patton (1990) on qualitative research, this thesis addresses the following question: How does drama education affect social interaction among students?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of drama education on social interaction among students. While the focus of the study was social interaction, it also assessed the related issues of empathy, egocentricity and assertiveness through the process of questioning and interviewing.

The following questions guided the research process:

1. How does drama influence your relatedness to your classmates?
2. How does drama influence your relatedness to people in your society?
3. How does drama influence your interaction with your family?
4. What sort of impact do you think drama will have on your social life in the future?
4. How would studying drama influence your future career?

### **Rationale**

With increasing demand from the general public and various legislative bodies for accountability in education, it is imperative that ample research is available to measure the outcomes of curricula, and specifically, of creative drama. In particular, this would help educators justify their emphasis on creativity by some tangible evidence of achievement, particularly as arts rather than science programs became increasingly vulnerable to cutbacks in funding.

The literature has addressed the question of the impact of creative drama on developing social interaction among students of different grades but I could not find a study which addresses

a wide scope of social skills similar to that in this study. While Rosen and Koziol (1990) as well as Altieri (1991) have assessed the relationship between creative drama activities and student oral reading and comprehension, Smith and Herring (1994) were different. They have adopted a linear perspective to dramatization having a set of rules and guidelines, concluding that communication skills and drama involve the trio: mind, body and voice. For his part, Croall (1992) has demonstrated that cooperation between health educators and creative drama teachers increases awareness about health issues. While each one of these studies focused on the relationship between creative drama education and the development of one or few social skills, I did not find a study which addresses the relationship between creative drama education and the development of a wide range of social skills. My research explores the relationships between creative drama education and the development of a wide range of social skills such as empathy, flexibility and democracy. Although, it does not add new dimensions to existing knowledge, the findings are still significant in validating the common concept that creative drama education enhances the development of social skills. This is because the number of studies which present a counter argument against the beneficial role of creative drama education drama in enhancing the development of social skills are relatively few.

Through use of qualitative research methods this study seeks to provide school boards with an appreciation of the demonstrable link between creative drama education and the development of important social interaction skills. Students also stand to benefit from the information contained in these findings by determining how drama education will affect their social development.

## Definition of Terms

### Teachers

In this study, teachers are educators who work directly with students in a classroom.

### Change

Change is a process for the sake of developing a healthy educational climate (Fullan, 1982).

### Characterization

Characterization involves taking on the role of another (Warger, 1988).

### Creative Drama

Creative drama involves informal drama experiences which may include tableau, pantomime, improvised skits and stories. These activities take place under the guidance of an educator but are planned by students. They aim at the personal growth and development of students rather than entertaining an audience (Heining, & Stillwell, 1974, p.5).

### Curriculum

A curriculum is the set of guidelines produced by the Ministry of Education with respect to an outline which teachers are to follow in transmitting knowledge.

### Improvisation

Improvisation is the creation and performance of a role without having a predetermined dialogue (Warger, 1988).

### Pantomime

Pantomime is a theatrical entertainment based on a fairy tale, with music (Allen, 1990).



OAC

The Ontario Academic Course (grade 13).

Skit

A light, short, piece of satire or burlesque (Allen, 1990).

### **Limitations**

The following constitute the limitations of the study:

1. There is no gender equity in the sample of participants. I was dependent on creative drama teachers who selected the sample of participants based on their academic achievements, which varied between average and above average. I specified to teachers that I was looking for average to above average students to ensure reasonable intellectual and cognitive development. This limited the teachers' choice of participants to those students whom they thought fell into this category. This procedure led to no gender equity in the choice of participants.
2. The way the sample was selected might be considered subjective as I had to depend on the opinions of others, in this case it was the teachers, in selecting students. There is also a possibility that students who enjoy drama but have lower levels of achievement were not included in my study.
3. The sample size consists of six participants which is small if compared to a quantitative research approach. However, as this is qualitative research, the number of participants is limited. What is important is the richness of the data gathered through interviews and non-participant observation. There was no need to expand the sample size as the information being obtained would have been redundant.
4. I did not observe students' behaviour prior to taking drama courses to compare their social interaction before and after completion of a creative drama course. This was due to time constraints. For grade ten students this would mean that I should have observed them sometime in December prior to starting my research which took place in March of the following year. With

respect to grade eleven and OAC it would have meant that I should have conducted a longitudinal study observing these students from grade ten throughout their years of schooling and compare their behaviours.

5. I did not interview teachers in other fields to compare their opinions on drama education, as opposed to what drama teachers say about their field.

## CHAPTER 2

### Review of Literature

In this chapter I will provide an overview of the major themes that characterize creative drama education. These include cognitive development, drama as a teaching method, drama as an art form, drama as imagination and personality development, and the effect of drama on social awareness. Personality development and social interaction are closely linked: this is because a positive influence on students' personality development has a direct bearing on their social interaction. Hence, one of the commonly-cited findings of research on the topic of creative drama is the effect of drama on social awareness.

#### Cognitive development

Guffin (1978) focuses on creative drama as a means of cognitive development. He indicates that the process of implementing ideas and evaluating situations may enhance critical thinking and problem solving techniques. As Guffin (cited in Shuman, 1978, p.128) posits, by creating problematic situations, students may become more aware that the problems they are encountering, although persistent, differ in outward form more than substance. Guffin claims that creative drama equips students with the skills and attitudes necessary for the career market.

Communication skills have been examined by Rosen and Koziol (1990) as a further link between cognitive development and creative drama. They conducted a qualitative study of four groups of grade nine students specifically to explore the relationship between reading, dramatic activities, theatrical production and student comprehension. They conclude that creative drama education has a greater influence on oral communication skills, while theater production has a

somewhat greater influence on knowledge and listening comprehension. They support the inclusion in the school curriculum of creative drama, both informal drama such as improvisation, role playing, mime and tableaux and more formal instruction such as theater arts.

While Rosen and Koziol (1990) examined communication skills and their relation to creative dramatics, Geoghegan (1994) has explored the impact of a creative drama program on community problem solving and inter-group cultural understanding. She conducted her study on four groups of fifteen students between the age of nine and eleven, asking the students to research various Native American tribes in order to invent their own tribe. To do this the children had to create a legend explaining how their tribe came into existence. In this process, Geoghegan explains that in addition to communicating their opinions, students were also able to cooperate in spite of their diverse intellectual abilities and cultural backgrounds.

#### Drama as a teaching method

Learning by doing has been one of the fundamental themes of twentieth century education. It was advocated in the United States by John Dewey, when he established the University Elementary School in 1896 and served as its director until 1904 (Katch, 1991, p. 61). His technique was later adopted by schools such as the Porter School, Missouri and the Dalton School, New York (Courtney, 1989, p.21). In the University Elementary School, besides being taught history and literature, students were encouraged to act out selected occupational roles. Acting out occupational roles helped students better understand these professions as they were asked to imagine what attracted people to these occupations (Jervis and Montag, 1991, p.64).

An alternative concept to learning by doing was advanced by Smith and Herring (1994) who

approached dramatization from a linear perspective. By linear they mean outlining a prescriptive recipe for generalist teachers encompassing three stages: planning, playing and finally evaluating. In the planning stage, they explored traditional African literature. A passage was selected and students were divided into three groups. Each group had to dramatize the selected passage either by vocal dramatization, or by combining both body and voice. With respect to the evaluation stage, students were asked to examine the small group actions, as well as link the experience to the world outside the classroom. In their evaluation of this approach, Smith and Herring conclude that life communication skills and drama involve mind, body and voice. They hold that this encourages students to visualize the relevance of effective communication skills to other areas of life.

Similar to Dewey's (1991) notion of learning by doing, Lazier and Sutton-Smith (1971) attempted to evaluate learning achievement by looking at students' abilities to create drama as a learning achievement in itself. To do so, they categorized dramatic behaviour of students when improvising. These categories were based on time, space and characterization. The study conducted failed to demonstrate a progression but showed that improvisation changed from being digressive and episodic to being conducted in a more linear dramatic structure with rules and less variation. McCaslin (1968) believes that creative dramatics has an important place in school curricula as it enhances critical thinking, creative development and communication skills in students. However, she does not believe that creative dramatics should be used solely as a vehicle for other areas in the curriculum. She indicates that there is a fear of "making dramatics a handmaiden to the other subject" (p. 9) thus undermining the role of drama as well as the

material it represents. In her opinion, creative drama may not improve the students' knowledge of the actual subject as much as give them an awareness of the human qualities involved.

### Drama as an art form

Slade's Child Drama (1954) is based on twenty years of participant observation of children and drama. He believes that child drama should be considered an art form similar to child music and child art, and that drama comes naturally to the child. In his opinion, the role of the educator should lie in making use of the spontaneous ideas of children.

Along the same lines of considering drama as an art form is Godfrey's (1992) notion that art teaches us to communicate feelings and accept compromise and ambiguity. He urges educators to teach the "survival skills of civilization and balance the theoretical with the practical" by applying principles from art (p.597). He shows that creative drama has always played a pivotal role in education. Rather than making a break with traditional educational techniques, he claims that creative drama has developed the five qualities described by Alfred North Whitehead in Adventures of Ideas (1933) as being essential to the survival of societies: truth, beauty, adventure, art and peace.

### Drama and imagination

Other studies have highlighted the link between creative drama and the development of the imagination. Duke (1974) has outlined the importance of teaching creative expression and use of the imagination in order for students to meet and adapt to rapid social change. He points out that it is through imagination that one is able to understand an experience beyond one's own realm. (p.5). Duke states that in a comparative study of British and North American schools on

the inclusion of creative drama in the curriculum, it was found that teachers in British schools were more aware of the significance of incorporating creative dramatics in the curriculum than their North American counterparts. This emphasis on creative drama in British schools has also been demonstrated by a study conducted by Squire and Applebee (1969) which showed that approximately 25% of class time at these schools was given to dramatic activities.

Similar to Duke's position regarding imagination is Courtney's belief that creative drama allows students to imagine a world beyond their own. In The Dramatic Curriculum Courtney (1980) posits that his main interest is not professional theater training but "the inner imaginative thought and the resulting spontaneous dramatic action which he claims is "the basis of human life" and "the essential component of all genuine education" (p.2). Courtney continues to elaborate on this theme in Play, Drama & Thought, (1989) by describing creative drama as an activity which allows us to imagine the world from someone else's point of view (p.177). According to Courtney, incorporating creative dramatics into the curriculum allows social learning, an effective tool in "chang[ing] who we are through what we do" by altering the students' own self-perception (p. 217). For Courtney (1989), creative dramatics is an "intrinsic and extrinsic learning process" (p.13). By intrinsic he refers to characteristics such as motivation, self esteem and problem solving, while for extrinsic he alludes to the learning process which includes "non-dramatic themes and subjects used [such as] history, literature" (p.13). He also describes educational drama as "the use of dramatization for the purposes of students' learning" (p.13). Although, Courtney explains, it is generally agreed upon that the implementation of creative arts in school enhances social interaction, there are still individuals



now a days who do not quite believe this notion.

### Personality development

Ward (1961) is interested primarily in creative drama as a means of personality development. In her book Creative Dramatics, she stresses that the greatest value of creative dramatics lies in the area of character development. She describes creative dramatics as group art for children, a perform-as-you-wish kind of dramatics, but it develops in students a respect for others and for themselves. She indicates that creative drama is a good way of advocating democracy by encouraging students to make choices, balancing the pros and cons of every situation (p.3-6).

Amelioration of self knowledge in students and personality development is also cited by Guffin (as cited in Shuman, 1978, p.128). These studies have shown that creative drama allows students to understand themselves, thereby being better able to comprehend the attitudes of their peers. According to Guffin (1978), schools may be places of understanding and empathy for students, without becoming psychiatric hospitals (as cited in Shuman, 1978, p.128). By incorporating creative drama in the curriculum, educators may aim at building up a well rounded generation. The onus lies on schools for this task, as they are influential institutions able to meet the creative needs of a large population (Duke, 1974, p.16). Through the incorporation of creative dramatics, schools may enable students to understand themselves and get in touch with their own feelings, emotions, and opinions. According to Courtney (1983), students involved in creative drama become more eloquent in communicating their ideas and dealing well with others. In essence, by knowing their own feelings they are better able to communicate to others. As Duke points out "a child has the right to know that all feelings are natural, but [s]he also

needs to learn to channel his feelings in ways that are acceptable to himself and to others" (p.14). On the same issue of communication Heining and Stillwell (1974) assert that "through communication the child learns to understand himself [or herself], others, and his culture" (p.6).

On the subject of teaching creative drama in schools, Barnfield (1968) describes the drama teacher as focusing mainly on the child's personality and character (p.14). By role-playing a character through improvisation or pantomime students are actually living the experience of this character in an attempt to be more sensitive to experiences different from their own. Styan (1965) sums up the significance of creative drama by referring to it as a social activity, in the sense that it hones social interaction skills among students.

By focusing on the same notion of personality development, Sandock (1994) states that creative drama motivates students in class and provides a sense of responsibility as students realize that they are the participants in a meaningful project. He points out that it is inevitable that students will achieve progress within the social context. This will be achieved with the help of the teacher, whose aim will be to assist them in reaching these goals and camaraderie.

Yaffe (1989) studied the personality development of elementary school students through the use of drama with at-risk and gifted learners. The at-risk students improvised and then wrote their own plays. In this process, they learnt that they could express themselves openly in a safe environment. Consequently, the self-esteem and self-confidence grew, making them more active participants in the learning process. In working with the gifted and talented, he incorporated drama in the curriculum through subjects such as history, in an effort to convey the human element of these subject to students.

### Drama and social awareness

Inextricably linked to personality development is the effect of creative drama on social interaction. British educator Dorothy Heathcote has promoted a philosophy of education which incorporates creative dramatics in the school curriculum (as cited in McCaslin, 1981, p.78). She claims the areas of feeling and social relationships are of major concern in creative drama in order to illustrate principles of real-life decision-making. She points out that in real life situations, we do not have the luxury, in many instances, of revising our decisions, a valuable lesson achieved through creative dramatics. She describes creative dramatics as a practice of living, "tuning up those areas of feeling-capacity and expression-capacity as well as social-capacity" (p.79). Drama, she explains, is not "rocks and fairies and people leaping about in leotards. Drama is a real man in a mess!" (as cited in Shuman, 1978, p.xi). In essence, it allows students to take a step beyond just reading about an experience. It allows them to live these experiences and examine a resolution which is appropriate to their surroundings.

Similar to Heathcote's position is McCaslin's (1968) view that creative dramatics in the classroom affords the opportunity for cooperation and social awareness among students. Thus, when a group creates something together such as a story or a skit, they learn a "valuable lesson in cooperation" overcoming social differences while "sharing ideas and improvising scenes" (p.12). McCaslin speculates that it also provides them with the opportunity to build social awareness, due to the development of empathy and human understanding through role playing (p.13).

In creative dramatics, educators are more concerned about the process and manner of presenting and discussing an issue, rather than the product of formal theater. In other words, the

main focus is on the way in which a problem is solved rather than the actual finished product of the presentation (McCaslin, 1968, p. 17). Creative dramatics is particularly beneficial to timid students as well as vocal students, enabling them to overcome their inhibitions and finding better means for getting attention (p. 30).

The significance of creative drama lies in the fact that it may provide experiences in social interaction, as creative drama education emphasizes group interaction. In creative drama students are allowed to create or improvise skits within a group, outlining situations which they might face in their daily lives, such as discussions with siblings or figures of authority. Warger (1988) points out that improvisation allows students an opportunity to solve problems and "react to certain environmental and/or social challenges" (p. 26). Albert (1994) cites examples of how improvisation in class allows students to create a variety of situations involving characters with different viewpoints and conflicts. She indicates that these exercises help students develop conflict resolution skills as they are forced to problem- solve, negotiate solutions with their peers, and reach a consensus acceptable to the group. Pantomime is another vital form in the development of creative dramatics as it plays a critical role in developing the expressiveness of students (Duke, 1974, p.86). It usually starts with students pretending to possess imaginary objects, and then develops to include an interaction with these objects. It aims at developing nonverbal communication skills (Warger, 1988, p.26). Creative monologues may also be an effective tool for communication. They enable students to abandon accepted conventions and stereotyped viewpoints, see characters in a different way by putting themselves in other people's shoes, and discover the common bond of humanity (Heining and Stillwell, 1973, p.9).

By suggesting practical strategies for promoting social interaction among students with behavioral problems, Warger (1988) provides drama activities to redirect students' misconduct. She points out that through participation in creative drama, students have the opportunity to exercise skills such as identifying certain emotions and communicating specific feelings in a noncompetitive way, providing them with positive experiences relating to their peers and other adults (p.30).

Croall (1992) demonstrates the effectiveness of drama in fostering health issues such as aids, increased co-operation between health educators and art workers, and a greater awareness and empathy among youngsters. Moreover, the use of drama in teaching potential school drop-outs how to deal with problems through conflict resolution increases these youngsters' chances of continuing their education.

Altieri (1991) uses another technique for enhancing empathy in students. By using drama in conjunction with students' favourite books during language arts instruction, she claims language skills can be improved by allowing children to act out their favourite characters. They develop empathy and understanding for their characters' feelings while developing a higher appreciation of literature in the process.

On the other hand, Pearson-Davis, S. (1988) has questioned the value of creative drama for children with behavioural problems. Although initially, she confirms the successful use of drama with troubled children in child psychotherapy, she cautions that educators, educational psychologists, and experimental psychologists do not share psychotherapists' views on the meaning and value of dramatic play. As she points out, the reasons for this skepticism have

been clarified by Fein (1981) in a review of experimental research on pretend play, which she explains are synonymous with dramatic and sociodramatic play. She shows that research on pretend and dramatic play presents mixed results. As most of the research conducted comprises short-term implications, it is misleading to assume that pretend play helps children's development. She posits that the lack of sociodramatic play in the training of students with behavioral problems has been "marred by confusion on the part of researchers" (p. 27), and that training disturbed children in sociodramatic play may not work. However, she points out that in spite of the weakness of the studies conducted in research, one of the most consistent findings is that enacting a story reduces egocentricity as students are allowed to think about others as well as themselves. In conclusion, she advocates that a closer coordination of therapy and education through drama activities with emotionally disturbed children might reveal inner conflicts that need special attention.

Wagner (1978) has also elaborated upon the move from egocentricity to ethnocentricity. According to Wagner, the move from self to culture marks a vital stage in the students' personal development since it improves their understanding of their milieu. Creative dramatics is the tool that enables students to get in touch with the wider world of their community. It enables a child to "overcome his immature egocentricity" (p.89). Hence, the onus lies on educators to promote creative drama education and develop these characteristics and attitudes in students.

### Summary

The current literature on the use of creative drama in education reveals five major

approaches to this issue: the impact of drama on cognitive development, on teaching by doing, drama as an art form and drama as a tool for imagination, and finally, the effect of drama on personality, character development and social awareness. To a great extent, personality development and social awareness are interrelated social skills since maturity in personality has a positive bearing on social interaction and vice versa.

The review of literature demonstrates that most studies conducted on drama education and its impact on social skill development examine one or two aspects of this field. In some instances researchers focus on examining the effect of drama education on an individual characteristic such as group problem solving with collaborative effort, and in other instances researchers study an interactive characteristic such as communication skills and cooperation. As each of these studies concentrate on only one or two approaches of drama education, my study will examine a wide range of social skills including both individual and interactive characteristics.

The review of literature does not take into account the link between individual and interactive characteristics as well as the interdependency of both, meaning that the development in one area affects the other. As well, these studies have not demonstrated how students at different developmental stages incorporate drama education into their social behaviour in class and in society on short and long term basis. This research probes the correlation between drama education and the development and enhancement of a wide range of social skills, including individual and interactive characteristics that students acquire after the completion of a creative drama education course.

## CHAPTER 3

### Design and Methodology

First I examine the characteristics of qualitative research. This is followed by a description of the research setting and the participants involved in the sample. The final section of this chapter deals with data collection, analysis and report writing based on the findings.

#### Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Researchers describe qualitative research as a “bottom-up” approach, inductively deriving information from the participants’ real world situations, allowing the data to speak for itself. Also known as grounded theory, this form of data collection is concerned with the meaning participants attach to their own experience and, thus, is more relevant to a study such as this, relating to social interaction. As opposed to a more quantitative approach concerned with quantifiable data collected in a controlled environment such as a laboratory, this study uses qualitative methods. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) point out that this involves the natural setting, and is concerned more with process than outcome.

#### Generalizability

Generalizations are often difficult in qualitative research as human experiences described are usually context-specific and evolve with time (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). However, Patton (1990) suggests that researchers may speculate on the "likely applicability of findings to other situations under similar, but not identical conditions" (Patton, 1990, p.489). While in quantitative research researchers look for universal laws to generalize their findings, they are more concerned with the depth and richness of data. As some would consider generalizability a limitation for a



qualitative research, curriculumists have used triangulation to remedy this reliance on speculation.

### Triangulation

Triangulation in a qualitative study involves using multiple methods and sources for information (Patton, 1990) in order to provide a more accurate assessment of data. In this study, a combination of interviews and observations will be employed to engage in a more comprehensive approach to data collection. This also provides a means of checking the consistency of information provided and validating information obtained via data triangulation.

### The Site

The research was conducted in two high schools in Northwestern Ontario. The schools are within a region composed of five high schools, under the administration of a Board of Education. Both schools are administered by a full-time Principal and Vice-Principal. These schools were suggested by the Superintendent of this Board as suitable on the grounds that their drama programs have been in existence for around fifteen years. The schools differ a great deal in terms of availability of drama classes. In one school, creative drama classes are held in an auditorium which houses around two hundred spectators. The setting is theatre like because it is used for preparation and presentation of theatre drama activities and for creative drama education. This is a new addition located on the first floor of the school, just across the hall from the main office. It is thus in a very central location. It is arranged in such a way that a section of this auditorium accommodates an office for each of the school's two drama teachers. There is also a partition which divides the auditorium in two sections, one of which functions as a stage, with ample space for class members to observe, and with side cupboards where students

keep their costumes. The other section consists of two round tables prepared in such a way as to allow students to work in groups in a friendly manner. At both corners of the stage there are two boards. One is for lighting and the other is for music. Students who are light or music directors use these boards for practice. Such physical considerations lead one to believe that a significant effort is made at this school to accommodate the drama program.

By contrast, the drama department at the second school is housed in a small carpeted room in which there is a small stage. At the end of this drama room there are narrow stairs leading to a small attic. The attic is used for storage of all sorts of costumes, chairs and mirrors. Things are dusty and piled on top of each other. The drama room is located in a remote place in the school, away from the normal flow of students. In fact, one could get lost very easily trying to find the drama room. The teacher pointed out that it was only recently that a sign was put on the door to direct students through the tunnel-like entrance to the drama room. While the teacher in this school admitted this location was far from other classes, she claimed such a location might prevent sound effects and music from disturbing other classes. Moreover, while the drama class had previously made use of a large auditorium well-suited for this activity, she explained that it was now reserved for physical education classes and special events (conversation with T2 en route to drama room)

### The Participants

The sample consisted of nine participants: Three female drama teachers and six students. Although I had intended to interview two teachers from each school, a fourth teacher became sick and had to be replaced by a supply teacher. After considering whether or not to include the

supply teacher in this study, I decided she was not be in a position to give ample data on students' perceptions about drama education due to her unfamiliarity with the students.

The student participants were two males and four females ranging in age from fifteen to nineteen in grades ten to thirteen. The main criterion for their selection was a reasonable level of intellectual development, motivation and commitment to class work determined by average to above average achievement levels in the creative drama class. According to this criterion participants were selected based on teachers' guidance. The selection of teachers was guided by some advice from school principals indicating that the teachers chosen were the most experienced teachers in this field based on years of experience.

After explaining the study to the teachers and students and obtaining their willingness to participate, I provided them with consent forms (Appendix Two). The consent letter included an explanatory paragraph describing the purposes, methods and delimitations of this study. In order to preserve confidentiality of the participants, pseudonyms were used for teachers identified as Hanna, Bonny and Tania, and students as Diana, Rana, Paul, Sonia, Alexandria and Jacob.

The following table is a summary of the participants interviewed:

**Table 1**

**Description of Participants**

**Teachers**

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Years of Drama Experience</u>
Female	over 20 years
Female	over 20 years
Female	over 15 years

**Students**

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>#of Drama Courses</u>	<u>Previous drama experience</u>	<u>Other similar related courses</u>
Female	16	10	none	none	none
Female	16	10	none	none	none
Male	17	11	3	yes	one drama course during summer
Female	16	11	2	yes	student council, leadership
Female	19	13	2	yes	drama summer camps
Male	19	13	4	yes	peer counseling

## Data Collection

### Ethics approval

The purposes and methods of data collection for this study were disclosed fully to participants in order to inform and protect them. Specifically, once written permission to conduct the research was approved by the Ethics Committee at Lakehead University, the Superintendent of the Board, school principals, and teachers were approached for their cooperation in the study. A consent form was given to students, parents and teachers during the planning phase. This consent form ensured that matters of confidentiality, withdrawal, and risks and benefits were covered before, during and after the interviews. Participants were also informed that data collected would be kept by the researcher for seven years, in accordance with the University's storage of data policy. All information contributed by participants was to be kept anonymous through the use of a code system based on pseudonyms known only to me. The information collected would be kept in confidential files and would not be made available to any other participant in the study or third party without prior written consent.

### Interviews

Open-ended interviews were the dominant strategy for data collection and were conducted with nine participants between March and April, 1996. Interviews were conducted via open-ended questions (Patton, 1990; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) allowing for the judicious use of probing questions to clarify issues or to explore matters having a direct bearing on the research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992 p. 97 and Patton, p. 325). While my presence in the classroom might, in itself, influence the participants, every effort was made to interact and question in an objective

fashion. If there was any possibility of such influence, it was noted in the findings. The location of the interviews varied according to availability of space in schools. In one school, interviews took place in the administration offices, while in the other school interviews were conducted in a small room at the back of the stage in the drama classroom.

Procedural direction was implemented according to methods suggested by Patton (1990) and Maykut & Morehouse (1994) where interviewing is based on a complete list of questions. However, even though an interview guide was employed, I had a considerable amount of freedom to pursue other topics which were relevant or which shaped the content of the interview in a different way (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992).

I designed this interview guide as a preliminary method of structuring the study. Careful consideration was given to the wording of questions as well as to clarity and format. Feedback was also sought from my thesis supervisor prior to submitting a final copy of the thesis proposal. The interview guide consisted of six questions related to the research question, for example: "How would studying drama influence your relations with your peers?" A complete set of the interview questions can be found in Appendix three. Each question was left open-ended to allow for the elaboration of thoughts and discourse. For example, question number five asks "what sort of impact do you think drama will have on your social life in the future?" Possible answers to this could encompass intimate relationships, or interaction with authority figures such as parents, bosses at work or even friendships. Questions were arranged in a logical way to facilitate transition from one topic to the next. For example, although question one appears to be a general question about why the student chose to study drama, it opens the discussion to issues

later such as personality characteristics and family involvement.

Permission was also obtained from participants to record the interviews on tape. During the interview, I used follow up questions to explore areas of significance to the focus of inquiry. For example, when a student described the negotiating process within a group prior to presenting the end product, I followed up by inquiring how this process may apply to home relationships. In other cases, I requested clarification on certain issues mentioned in passing by the participant (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). For example, when one participant described drama as a more "hands on" activity, I asked what s/he meant by this expression.

Interviews also included methodological notes which incorporated comments concerning the process taking place or the re-working of procedures and how questions could have been improved. For example, the simple yes/no question, "Do you think drama would help you socially with friends and intimate relationships?" could have been worded in such a way to elicit a more open-ended and detailed response i.e. "How do you think drama would help you socially with friends and intimate relationships?" In another instance, a certain response was expected from the participants, "How would you think drama will help you with other courses?". A better version of this question might have been, "How does drama effect other courses that you are taking/will take?" Also, a question like "Do you find a difference between yourself and other students who did not take drama?" could have been worded "In what way do you think you are different from your peers who did not complete a drama course?".

All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. They were then coded, alphabetically according to name, school and grade. They were then photocopied and organized

in a file according to the participant's pseudonyms. The decision to end the collection of data was made when I realized interviews were beginning to produce similar results. As Bogdan and Biklen (1982) state the point at which information becomes redundant is determined by the researcher (p.64) and is known as data saturation point. Patton (1980) on the other hand points out that there is no definite point at which data collection stops and analysis begins (p.184). I disagree with Patton's definition as I found while conducting interviews that information obtained was becoming redundant. It was then that I decided to stop collecting further data. In total, nine interviews were conducted, resulting in one hundred and fifty pages of transcripts.

#### Non-participant Observation

Observation consisted of both personal reflections outlining my own reactions to the data, and notes as a non-participant observer of classes, describing the milieu and the social context in which creative dramatics took place. Field notes were utilized to confirm information and set the tone of the study providing a back up for what was reported in interviews.

Due to time constraints, I chose to be a non-participant observer of grade ten, eleven and OAC students in only one school as I wanted to see if students' perception of drama education matched their behaviour. Observation took place during the morning periods, between nine and twelve o'clock in the drama auditorium, except for grade eleven. As grade eleven students were working on their skits, they wanted to work in a more secluded area which they found in the school cafeteria. I went with them to a corner in the cafeteria which had been separated by a partition so they could work as a group and not be disturbed.

In some instances, I observed the whole class working together on improvisation, as was the



case with OAC. In other classes, I started by observing the whole class, followed by observation of smaller groups working on skits as in grades ten and eleven.

For example, I had an interesting observation of grade ten students working on skits, they were very active, running around the auditorium and eager to try their masks. They were all excited to arrange their scenes and were pushing each other, jumping stairs, playing music and trying costumes. The class was divided into four groups and each group was supposed to work on its skit. I observed one student, Diana, in her group and noticed that the group dynamics involved a lot of negotiation and flexibility. Diana was the leader of this group, taking the initiative and recording the changes recommended by others. As each group sat in a circle to discuss how they would proceed, some students became active in this process, while others remained more passive observers. Diana seemed to be the democratic leader who accepted suggestions willingly. Observing her confirmed what she reported during the interview in that she stated that she negotiates and discusses issues with her group in a very democratic and flexible manner.

The grade eleven students were observed next and appeared to be more mature in their discussion than their grade ten counterparts, albeit less active. The class was divided into five groups and each group had the responsibility of presenting a short script. In Sonia's group, the students commenced by going through the process of presenting, adjusting the setting and movement details. I observed that there was mutual respect among students and also noted there was a desire to achieve a common goal and meet deadlines.

Lastly, I observed Jacob leading a group in preparation for a skit. He seemed to be confident

in this leadership role, yet flexible in accepting questions and criticism from the other students. I also observed that other students were receptive to the changes he suggested provided he justified such changes. In one instance, a student asked for the rationale behind a change in movement made by Jacob and appeared satisfied with his explanation. While the teacher was present in this group, she acted more as a facilitator than an authority figure, offering suggestions when asked for assistance from her students. In the other two grades, the creative drama teacher besides teaching wore several hats serving as a facilitator and an observer.

To have a more accurate assessment of students' behaviour it would have been necessary to adopt a comparative approach, observing students' behaviour before and after taking drama classes. Due to time constraints and other practical difficulties, such a long-term approach would have been beyond the scope of this paper.

#### Data Analysis

The data were analyzed following formats used in studies by Patton (1990), Bogdan & Biklen (1992) and Maykut & Morehouse (1994). Constant comparative analysis (Bogden & Biklen, 1992) were performed on the data collected, so that as the analysis proceeded, emerging categories were re-defined according to additional data. I also followed Guba's suggestion as described by Patton (1990) regarding "convergence" which entailed grouping things together (p.402). This was done by observing "recurring regularities" in the data (p. 402-403) which are patterns that are either similar or different.

## Transcripts

At closure, the interview transcripts were subjected to context and content analysis which entailed recognizing and coding patterns that exist in the data which encompasses interviews and observations. I then used the context analysis to determine the themes of the interviews such as gaining more flexibility, being more assertive and having an increased empathy towards others. The content analysis consisted of extracting comments from the transcripts related directly to the research problem such as being more “ democratic” and able “to negotiate” differences and “accepting of criticism”. Being able to control emotions was also another recurrent theme during interviews with students and teachers. I then did a case-study analysis of each person interviewed followed by a cross-case analysis through grouping together answers from different people on the same topic.

This qualitative study utilized interviews and observations; the intention was to explore and discover categories and patterns that emerged from open-ended questions and field notes. The inductive design allowed similar paradigms to emerge without presupposing in advance what the outcome was to be. I then applied the deductive method in the interpretation process. This means that patterns of analysis emerging from the data were not imposed by me prior to data collection and analysis (Patton, 1990, p. 390). The data was collected through the naturalistic inquiry strategy where participants were allowed to describe "themselves and their social world" (p.191).

Finally , all information from the context and content analyses was copied on summary sheets in point- form, highlighting key words, verbatim statements and phrases, along with my own

notes. Using these summary sheets, I was able to further analyze and synthesize the information for appropriate presentation in my research. Hence, data was grouped into meaningful categories to deduce common themes such as confidence, assertiveness, tolerance, better communication skills, flexibility, compromise and democracy in dealing with groups. Information in the transcripts was coded both alphabetically and numerically, using categories based on social themes until all transcripts were analyzed. After placing under each specific unit the information that fell under this category, I highlighted the most recurrent themes using these as the basis for analysis.

### Field Notes

In organizing my field notes, I used theoretical categorizations of the most common patterns and themes from prior observation. This was very helpful as an analytical tool. Themes such as self-confidence, assertiveness and respect for differences of opinion emerged when participants spoke of individual growth, while themes such as communication skills, compromise and negotiation surfaced in discussions of group dynamics. They also included reflections on connections between units of data and suggested new directions for the research. Key words and phrases were highlighted such as “being open”, “express my feelings”, “self-confidence”, “compromise”, “negotiate” and “vote”. All field notes were dated, with the original set kept in chronological order. Each note was coded to facilitate future cross-referencing.

## CHAPTER 4

### Interpretation of Findings

After conducting interviews with students, I identified several themes based on common attitudes and behaviours among students involved in creative drama. Some of these characteristics had more to do with individualistic traits such as building confidence and self esteem, being more assertive and being able to control one's emotions. Other traits were more related to group interaction such as respecting differences of opinion and being more understanding of how others feel. Other social interactive skills included the ability to be democratic, flexible, tolerant of positive criticism from peers, and capable of expressing oneself by communicating feelings and emotions effectively. Teacher's responses, like the students' replies, encompass some interactive skills as well as individual characteristics that students acquire while being involved in creative drama classes. Teachers' responses support the students' responses in most areas, although there were some issues not addressed specifically by the teachers because they were not emphasized in the interview. The individual characteristics are assertiveness, self-confidence and regulating emotions. The interactive skills that teachers recognize are communication skills, empathy, flexibility, tolerance and democracy.

#### Section One: Individual Characteristics

##### Theme 1: Self confidence and Self-esteem

The majority of participants concluded that creative drama education improved their self-confidence. A few of them specifically mentioned the word self-esteem. Most students found

that once they build up their self-confidence through drama, their self-image also improved. In cases of low self-esteem, however, creative drama education may have little effect on students' self-image due to various psychological factors which might be involved in this process.

Being involved in a group activity enabled students to realize they are an integral part of society and that others depend on them just as they depend on others. This interdependency makes students believe in themselves and appreciate their own worth as a valuable member of the wider group. They interact in a safe environment with no competition, working together to achieve a common goal. Accordingly, through constructing relationships with peers, students are able to develop a healthy concept and image of themselves. The following vignettes describe how improvisation, role playing, mime, pantomime, and tableaux foster in students a sense of self-confidence, and consequently higher self-esteem.

Describing how she felt in a biology class with much older students, Diana in grade ten claimed she was initially self-conscious about the fact she was the youngest student and did not know anyone else in the class, apart from her boyfriend. As Diana put it "before drama, I did not really want to talk to people I did not know. . . I was kind of scared to talk to anybody. . .like the first day of school" (Diana, interview, p.14). Diana credited creative drama for changing her personality saying it increased her self-esteem. Since taking drama, she claimed she "can just go and talk to somebody" without feeling "stupid or weird or anything" (p.5).

Another student, Rana, also attributed her increased self-confidence to drama class where improvisation exercises improved her ability to express herself, making it "easier to say things out loud and speak". When Rana was asked how drama education influenced her family

relationships, if at all, she looked very perplexed and indicated she really did not know if there was such an influence.

When Paul in grade eleven was asked the same question, it took him some time to make the connection between what he learned in drama class and the wider circle of family members. After some initial consideration, however, he found that being more involved in drama improved his relationship with his siblings since it made him more open and confident about expressing his feelings. While Paul admitted he “used to be really intimidated” by his much larger brothers, after exposure to drama he felt “more self-confident. . . like I can stand up to them” (Paul interview, p.3). His increased confidence and self-esteem also enabled Paul to overcome his earlier sensitivity to comments about his thick glasses, braces and taller than average appearance. Paul claimed that since involvement in drama, “I have learned who I am and I am proud of who I am” (Paul interview, p.4).

While Paul attributed his greater self-confidence regarding his outward appearance to drama class, Alexandria applied lessons gained from creative drama to other courses. She claimed that creative drama education helps her to overcome her initial shyness and nervousness, making her more “comfortable with people” during presentations in other classes (Alexandria interview, p.2). In the process of conquering her nerves, her self-confidence improves over time.

Although creative drama affected these students in different ways, in all of these cases, it served to boost their self-esteem and self-confidence according to the students. Alexandria went further in her comments, attributing excellence in other courses to her involvement in drama.,

Teachers seem to agree that creative drama education boosts self-confidence. Some of them

actually point out that creative drama also helps to a great extent those students who are not very successful academically. One of the teachers pointed out that other fellow teachers indicated it was easy to figure out which students had been involved in drama while seeing and listening to their class presentations. This was because such students seemed less inhibited and more open about their feelings and emotions. As one teacher, Hanna, explained, students involved in drama are also able “to use their bodies in a much more creative way” (Hanna interview, p.1). Another teacher, Bonny also noted this increased self-esteem on the part of drama students, saying “they feel more confident . . . they are not afraid to talk in front of groups anymore [and] are not afraid to give ideas and express themselves (Bonny interview, p.1). A third teacher identified the role of creative drama in enhancing confidence and self-esteem to less academically successful students. She explained that such students “come into drama and find some place where they can succeed” making them “feel better about themselves” and applying this to other subjects (Tania interview, p.11). Since increased self-confidence enables one to be more open, expressing one’s opinion without worrying about what other people might say, it led to another attribute noted by teachers and students: assertiveness.

### Theme 2: Assertiveness

Since creative drama education incorporates group activities, it is related to improvements in social relations, moral reasoning and personal development. One of the main characteristics of the latter is assertiveness. Assertiveness is one of the major personal development characteristics which is a by-product of creative drama education. This characteristic is identified by many participants as playing a pivotal role in helping them to be able to express



their opinions and actually speak their minds. Several participants described situations in which assertiveness was realized albeit in different ways. For instance, while Alexandria visualized herself becoming more assertive with people in society, Sonia saw this change occurring in other relationships with family members. On the other hand, Jacob and Paul experience the impact of this assertiveness on their career plans. Alexandria, an OAC student involved in drama courses and summer camps for four years, claimed that creative drama makes her “more outgoing”, allowing her to take more initiative in doing previously difficult things, such as introducing herself to strangers. As she explained, “I would go up and introduce myself to people—something I would never do before” (Alexandria interview, p.3).

For her part, Sonia sees creative drama education as going beyond the inner circle of self to the outer circle of the community. In considering the impact of drama on relationships with her family, she claims that her experiences in drama makes it “easier to talk to them about things and tell them my opinion” especially with her brother (Sonia interview, p.2).

Sonia, a grade eleven student, only came to this conclusion after some initial hesitation and reflection on the subject. On the other hand, to an OAC student such as Alexandria, these connections came more readily. Yet Sonia too was able to apply lessons learned from creative drama to her other courses, particularly in improving her performance in groups and confidence in expressing her own opinions in class (Sonia interview, p.10). Moreover she gained an understanding of the importance of speaking one’s mind to have healthy relationships. As she expressed it, “you have better relationships if. . . you say what you really think. . . speak your opinion and just not be afraid to say how you feel. . . if something is bothering you” (Sonia

interview, p.7).

Similar to Alexandria, Jacob also an OAC student, was able to relate instantly how drama education helped him cope with difficulties at work. He claimed that assertiveness gained from drama class enabled him to calmly but firmly deal with some customers who are disturbing other patrons of the restaurant where he worked part-time (Jacob interview, p.6).

Paul, on the other hand, has difficulty relating creative drama to his interpersonal relations and career plans. After continued questioning and some thought on the subject, he replied that drama has enabled him to “open up to people and tell them how I feel” allowing him to “be myself around them” (Paul interview, p.11).

The above excerpts reveal how drama education has affected participants’ personalities in a variety of ways. Some students are now able to express themselves in front of siblings or even at the workplace. Some others now feel more confident in presenting their work in front of other students in different courses. In essence, participants have indicated that they are now able to stand up for themselves and express themselves in a positive way.

Assertiveness was another theme which teachers attributed to group work which helped the students express their opinion in an acceptable way to others. One teacher pointed out that students became more assertive in the sense that they understand themselves better and stood up for their rights. As Hanna described it, creative drama helped the students “be assertive in a positive sense that they will stand up to what they feel is right and to what they deserve” (Hanna interview, p.2). She pointed out that even teachers in other departments such as Science or English could distinguish between students who participated in drama courses and those who did

not. According to Bonny, other teachers often remarked that students in drama “do the best presentations because they use everything and they are not afraid to get up there and . . . make it interesting or take a few risks” (Bonny interview, p.2). In my own judgement, those teachers statements are quite significant to highlight the need for creative drama activities in accessing other areas of curriculum.

### Theme 3: Regulating Emotions

Expressing oneself in a positive way is closely related to being able to control one’s emotions. In order to explore this area further, I asked the participants how they would deal with conflicts in family or at school after having been exposed to creative drama. The participants indicated that after being heavily involved in group dynamics they had to learn how to control and express their emotions and feelings in an acceptable way.

In general, students in lower grades are less able to apply their dramatic experience to life situations outside school when these involve controlling their emotions. After some reflection on this, Rana was able to cite a recent instance of an argument with her friend, during which she was able to restrain her feelings and redirect them in a positive way, a response which she admitted “ worked better than yelling and screaming” (Rana interview, p.13).

Paul similarly claimed that drama education helped him put his anger into words rather than resorting to fighting, as he had previously done. Although he did not acknowledge this initially, Paul later added that drama enables him to control his emotions (Paul interview, p.14).

Sonia, on the other hand, claimed that creative drama activities allowed her to release some

of her emotions, enabling her “to put up with” people she did not get along with. As Sonia states, “you have to learn to be tolerant of people you don’t get along with at the same time venting emotions through acting” (Sonia interview, p.14). It appears from Rana’s and Paul’s responses that the teacher may need to help students reflect on their experience during and after drama work, courses and activity. This process will assist students, particularly those from younger grades, to expand their use of learned social skills beyond the scope of the classroom into a wider circle.

While Sonia was able to regulate her emotions in order to deal with different situations, Alexandria believed she was able to channel her emotions and “nervousness” through drama, which made her “calm down and not be so stressed out about things” (Alexandria interview p.10). She even claimed that drama helped her deal with feelings of anger withing the family context. While she used to “start yelling” at her sisters during their frequent arguments, Alexandria learned not to pay attention to their provocations, saying she has become “a really different person (Alexandria interview p.11).

While Alexandria expressed her emotions through relaxation exercises, Jacob has been able to control unpleasant feelings such as anger and frustration through writing. Since his involvement in drama, Jacob had found a constructive way of expressing his emotions:

I would not go on and start punching things or destroy things .  
Usually I just sit down and write about it, what I was feeling and just that way it feels like it is getting out, you don't have to tell anyone or hurt anyone's feelings by saying it. I just write it read it over and find this was ridiculous, rip it up and throw it out . . . That is how when I am mad about something that is what I do. . . I don't like writing to begin with but if I have an emotion that I don't like to talk about I will just sit down and write and it seems to go away (Jacob interview, p.13).

Jacob and Alexandria's responses indicate more maturity and experience. They were both able to relate their experience to an outer circle of community. Their response was immediate and they could transfer their experience from class to community relatively easily.

As dramatizing commonly occurring situations is a very powerful way to release imaginative abilities, improvisation, role-playing and mime can be quite effective in expressing common problems, concerns, and experiences (Brookfield 1987). Tania said that a lot of counseling happened in drama class, teaching students to find alternative outlets for their emotions: As she commented "instead of putting your fist through the wall", the students were taught how they "could deal with anger" (Tania interview, p.5). She elaborated on this notion indicating that sometimes this anger stems from group interaction and lack of communication. Accordingly, she pointed out that it is imperative to sit down as a group and look at ways of helping the angry student, solving group problems in a way that satisfies everyone. In some instances problems become serious enough to be referred to the guidance office. Yet, she insisted that drama class is the first place many of these students "learn to work together and . . . to handle anger in a way that is not violent" (Tania interview, p.5).

Further evidence of this role of drama was Bonny's example of a female student who learned how to work through her aggression and "deal with her anger" through drama. (Bonny interview, p.5). This theme brings us to democracy which is one of the interactive characteristics which participants indicated that had they acquired in creative

drama education. By being able to regulate their emotions, they became more willing to listen to others and discuss things with them.

## Section Two: Interactive Characteristics

### Theme 1: Democracy

Involvement in group work, such as presenting creative drama projects, encourages students to learn how to deal with their differences and approach problem solving. When given a project, students have to reach a consensus. During this process of compromise and negotiation, they become more aware of the importance of individual relations within the wider group. During observation of group interaction, there seemed to be no evidence of power effects such as silencing, manipulation, coercion or discrediting. As Brookfield (1987) points out “from this awareness springs an understanding that changes in individual lives are often inextricably linked to alterations in wider social structures” (p.58). This process was described by Diana who explained that after finding their common interests, the members of the group often resorted to a vote since “it is a group activity so you don’t just leave your decisions . . . up to one person . . . everybody has to decide on things” (Diana’s interview, p.11). As in the case of assertiveness, students of higher grades are more competent than younger students at transferring their learning experience from drama to real life. Younger participants appeared to have more difficulty applying social skills learned in class to other areas of life such as relationships with friends, other students or family.

Although she required some time to think about the connection, Diane claimed she would now discuss and negotiate things rather than insist on her point of view (Diana interview, p.13).

Rana's response, on the other hand, was immediate, confirming that with her group the process of negotiation happens quite often. She described the mechanism used by her classmates to come to a consensus: "If there is something that we cannot settle on . . . we will take a vote" (Rana interview, p.2). In addition to such formal means of reaching settlements, others described the use of open discussion to resolve differences. As Paul related:

Well, I would explain how I felt about the situation and let them tell me how they feel because there is always a chance that I could be wrong as well (Paul interview, p.5).

Paul claimed such exchanges often lead to "brain-storming" sessions, after which a vote is held "to find out which one came with the best idea and we go with that" (Paul interview, p.6). During such discussions, the overall group dynamics are constructive and positive, with everyone's viewpoint respected by the others. As Sonia explained:

Everyone gets the chance to talk...sometimes someone will get a little bit too overbearing. I have done that a couple of times and I find others do the same thing but we just try to keep each other in line (Sonia interview, p.3).

A more mature student, Jacob related how he and his female classmate worked out their frequent differences of opinion, often accepting suggestions from the others involved in the arrangement of a skit. As Jacob explained, "we both suggest things and will look at a way where we use both ideas and we mesh them together" (Jacob interview, p.3).

Being able to negotiate and discuss issues rationally to reach a consensus by voting also improved the communication skills of participants, helping them overcome conflicts by expressing themselves more effectively. Piaget (1928/1976) argues that differences between

individuals can stimulate intellectual and moral development. One needs understanding and empathy to see the others point of view first. Maturity and development in character occurs when an individual is able to enlarge his/her own perspective by taking into account other viewpoints. In essence, conflicts may be viewed as a potential source of development in individual communication skills.

Teachers did not talk directly about democracy, although they made oblique references to it in their statements, emphasizing the role of drama in enhancing other social skills. In fact, this theme was not emphasized as much by teachers as it was by students. This might be due to the fact that for students, group experience is valuable as they are constantly involved in a negotiation process within their groups. Moreover, they are perhaps more aware of authority imbalances, group dynamics and techniques such as negotiation and voting.

Some teachers, however, did attach importance to the value of creative drama in encouraging cooperation and mutual respect since students had to “learn to share that they are not the only ones that have ideas, other people do to” (Tania interview, p.4).

While Hanna claimed that students are now “able to work as a group together” (Hanna interview p.4), Bonny noted improvements in their general attitudes toward other students. As she pointed out, students were learning “to listen to everybody a little bit more equally” (Bonny interview p.4). The fact that drama, according to students, advocates democracy means that better communication skills, prevail in this process. Incorporated in democracy is negotiation, discussion and expressing oneself effectively. Hence communication was another theme highlighted by teachers and students as a characteristic acquired during drama classes.



## Theme 2: Communication

Most of the participants commented on the importance of creative drama exercises in improving their ability to express themselves effectively. Communication skills are important tools for tolerance and acceptance in our society. Drama teachers stress the importance of these tools in creative drama activities. As Diana pointed out, "I feel that I can speak with other people and I can better express myself" (Diana interview, p.14). Rana also felt communication skills from drama would improve her ability to express herself openly in her social life (particularly with her boyfriend) and her future career as a lawyer. As she put it, such skills would "make me more open to talk to people and to be able to relate to people I represent" (Rana interview, p.8). Moreover, she no longer seemed concerned by what other people think, making it "a little bit easier to say things out loud" (Rana interview, p.4).

Describing his former self as "kind of closed in" and referring to previous "trouble with my peers", Paul said drama enabled him to "discover himself, allowing him to express his feelings freely and be more open to others" without putting on a show or anything (Paul interview, p.15). Sonia was more specific in her description, immediately making the connection between drama education and her family relationships. She claimed her exposure to drama made it "easier to talk to them [her family] about things and tell them my opinion" especially improving relations with her brother (Sonia interview, p.10). Rana has applied this new-found communication to her own family, saying she would now listen to her siblings and "hear them out" rather than just ignore them as previously (Rana interview, p.5). To Alexandria, oral presentations became

easier since she is now “more outgoing” and inclined to “take more initiative to do things I never used to do” (Alexandria interview p.3). According to her, the best quality derived from drama class was “the ability to get along with different kinds of people”, a reply was made without any hesitation. (Alexandria interview p.12). It is not difficult for her to relate the effectiveness of drama education to a sphere larger than the school.

Communication is described by teachers as a vital contribution made by drama since students have to learn to speak and listen to others, rather than be passive recipients of information. In this subject area, knowledge is transmitted by actually doing things and being involved actively in the action itself. Hanna maintained that drama differs from other subjects in that students communicate with each other both formally and informally, through voice and gestures, “rather than reading and receiving things more passively” (Hanna interview, p.2.). This more active approach to learning has led to the students’ increased awareness of their environment and an “awareness of what their rights are” (Hanna interview, p.2). Tania went further in her assertion that “I don’t know if you can talk about creative drama with it not being communication” (Tania, interview, p.2). Such improvements in students’ communication skills extend to an ability to interpret body language and “getting accustomed to the fact that a lot of our communication is not just done with our voice” (Bonny interview, p.2). As Bonny described it, “they learn that their body language can communicate just as much as they can verbally” (Bonny interview, p.10). Being an effective communicator and a good listener leads to respect. Participants indicated that respect was another aspect of creative drama that they acquired in class.

### Theme 3: Respect

Students learn in group work that each individual contributes to the whole. They develop an appreciation of each other's worth and learn to recognize that each person has abilities and contributions to make. The lack of rigid structuring in drama education enables students to be more creative and be more accepting of differences. Hence, each person is appreciated for the value of his/her contribution. Diana described this feeling of security and acceptance in drama class where "no one ever ridicules other people's feelings or . . . for having different opinions in class" (Diana's interview, p.4).

The group dealt with differences such as a new suggestion or idea by trying to "incorporate it into the story and maybe not the whole idea if somebody does not like it" (Rana interview, p.12). The atmosphere of respect in the group is also underlined by Paul who explained, "when we let our feelings out we see that everybody listens and they don't judge you or criticize you" (Paul's interview, p.14). He elaborated on this point describing the change that occurred in his character since elementary school by saying, "... but now I can accept them [different points of view]" (Paul's interview, p.16).

Some students attributed this attitude or respect to increased awareness and sensitivity to others feelings or, as Sonia put it, the ability "to react to someone who is different than you" (Sonia interview, p.7). Paul also attested to the accepting and non-judgmental atmosphere in drama class, commenting, "we see that everybody listens and they don't judge you or criticize you" Paul interview, p.14).

This accepting atmosphere of drama class depends to a great extent on the teacher. It is the

teacher who is the leader and mentor in this case. If the teacher is not accepting of students' views which are not necessarily parallel to hers/his own, then there would never be respect either between teacher and students or between students and their peers. In a broader sense one can say that drama education is a set of processes, conventions which teachers can make work and come to life, and students can make usefulness out of.

Teachers responses advocated what students had pointed out regarding increased respect in drama class. Bonny claimed that respect was essential since "certainly we are all individuals within the group" (Bonny interview, p.1). Tania described the development of respect among drama students saying, "there is more respect, more understanding of other people's feelings" (Tania interview, p.11). Learning to respect differences in groups helped participants to be more understanding of other people's views and consequently more empathetic.

#### Theme 4: Empathy

Students also state that creative drama activities enables them to imagine themselves in the shoes of other characters to see and feel things from another perspective. As Heathcote (1981) puts it "thinking from within a situation forces a different type of thinking" (as cited in Shuman, 1978, p.9). Role playing different situations of anger, love, hatred, and pity enables students to become more attuned to the factors that lead to these situations, and hopefully more understanding.

These exercises help students to be more understanding of other people's feelings and emotions. Role-playing, for instance, serves as an invaluable device in preparing students for

complex situations which might occur later in life. For Alexandria, role-playing helped her to understand different characters better and hence respect these differences within her group. As she put it, “you learn what these characters are thinking and . . . you get to see two sides of a story when you are reading a script” (Alexandria interview, p.8). Moreover, she also is able to relate character analysis to her ability “to understand what other people are thinking and feeling” (Alexandria interview, p.4). According to Alexandria, her drama teacher taught her a number of life skills such as the ability to recognize the darkness or brightness in human nature. In one exercise students learned that some people have a certain darkness in their life which is not explicit, but nonetheless is important to “understand the character” (Alexandria interview, p.12).

By putting herself in the shoes of another person through drama, Diana was able to understand the dynamics that go through the mind of this specific character and apply this lesson outside drama class. As Diana remarked, “by being in another character. . . you can see things different ways . . . you can learn how that person feels not in drama but also in other classes” (Diana’s interview, p.7). This ability to see things from another’s perspective also enabled her to understand her mother’s pressure on her to do well in school. As Diana put it:

When I think about it...and I try to put myself into her character I know because she did not do that well in school and is now going back to school and . . . she does not want that kind of life for me so I kind of understand why she pushes me so much. (Diana interview, p.7).

Rana has applied the same lesson in an attempt to understand better why some people are sometimes unkind, especially in cases where they may “actually have a reason” for such behaviour (Rana interview, p.8). While Rana claimed drama has helped her understand often

people's actions, Sonia said it has opened her eyes to understanding different types of people and "how to have a relation with them". She now realizes that not all people can be approached "in the same way" (Sonia interview, p.6).

Most of the teachers hold that drama helps students develop empathy for each other and become more understanding of each other's feelings. Hanna compared this with the typical classroom environment "where the emphasis is on academics and perhaps factual information . . . not on the person. . . as much as it is in drama then empathy isn't often there. (Hanna interview, p.5). Hanna attributed much of this ability to empathize to role playing "because they have to adopt different roles . . . they break that selfishness of the teenage years" (Hanna interview, p.5). In describing the growing empathy among students, Bonny suggests this development occurs in two stages: After first putting oneself in other's shoes, students are encouraged to translate this into their daily interactions. Just as drama enables students "to discuss some sort of feelings as they relate to a character which is a little bit separate from yourself", they must take the next step of trying "to put those feelings into life" (Bonny interview, p.5). By becoming more attuned to other people's feelings, role-playing also encourages empathy on the part of the audience, according to Tania. She claimed that students often use role-playing to deal with real-life crisis situations. By talking openly with one another, "acting out their frustrations on the stage", role-playing "helps them out in relieving a lot of the frustration" surrounding relational difficulties such as break-ups. (Tania interview, p.5). This openness leads to some kind of flexibility and tolerance among students. They now can understand characters and actions which are different from their own.

### Theme 5: Flexibility:

An ability to empathize with and understand another person's viewpoint and emotions also enables one to be more flexible and open to change. Through involvement in creative drama, students become more aware of the diversity of values, behaviours and social structures in the world. Brookfield (1987) describes this process by saying that creativity helps us "gain an awareness that others in the world have the same sense of certainty we do . . . but about ideas, values, and actions that are completely contrary to our own (p.5)". When students realize there are alternative to a supposedly rigid belief or values system, they become more open and accepting of these, Brookfield (1987).

Most students remark on this greater flexibility and openness to change, albeit in different ways. Diana is more open to compromise and "more flexible" in attempts "to get along with people much better". (Diana interview, p.12). Paul saw this flexibility when working with peers on a "finished project to do a skit or a visual thing" using their input as well as his own. In cases of disagreement, she and her peers all try to compromise and negotiate things "to use part of the idea and incorporate it into the story" (Rana interview, p.3). Increased flexibility in no way diminished their own individuality, and contributed to a greater spirit of compromise. Sonia explained in the following way:

You have to use your own individuality but you have to listen to other people too and [since] nobody can have their way all the time a combination of your ideas and other people's ideas often works better than just your own (Sonia interview, p.6).

While Sonia demonstrated her maturity in her realization that no one can ever have his/her own

way all the time, this seemed to be a more difficult lesson for Diana and Rana. This might have been due to their ages of maturity.

According to teachers, students became more flexible and willing to accept different opinions after being involved in various group projects. In one situation described by Bonny working on an anthology on suicide, one boy withdrew from a group without giving a reason for his action. After talking with the student and informing the rest of the group of the reason, the class picked another topic to discuss so as not to “isolate him” or make him “feel uncomfortable” (Bonny, p.3). Hanna noted that the students’ willingness “to cooperate” was facilitated by the early use of first names which, in itself, overcomes “a huge barrier of awareness” and “preconceived notions from what the person looks like”. This teacher claimed drama students “usually gel” as a group, becoming “life-long friends through that exposure of a drama class” (Hanna interview, p.6).

#### Theme 6: Tolerance

Since there is a lot of peer evaluation in drama, students learn how to give and receive criticism in a positive way, contributing to their overall tolerance. As Brookfield (1987) points out “for any effective communication to take place between people, there must be a readiness in those involved to try to understand each others’ perspectives” (Brookfield, 1987, p.47). Rana realized the value and purpose of positive criticism in encouraging to change herself since others “are not trying to be mean but it is just something that you should work on and they are just giving you their opinion” (Rana interview, p.10). She also recognized the mutual give-and-take



involved in compromise where “when you compromise they think, oh well she is willing to do that so next time maybe I give in to her... it is kind of a mutual thing there” (Rana’s interview, p.6). Rana transferred this knowledge from the group dynamics of her drama class to her family relationships where her relations with her parents benefitted from “compromising is the thing that you bring home with you” (Rana interview, p.5).

Sonia’s responses also reflect a degree of maturity in recognizing the need to accept positive criticism rather than resorting to childish reactions. As she admitted, criticism is not “something that I particularly like to do but. . . we have to learn [to] criticize people in a nice way and people have to learn how to take what other people tell them and use it more effectively” (Sonia interview, p.5). She claimed she learned this skill in drama class “because we do that in drama more than in any other class” (Sonia interview, p.3). Sonia also maintained she was now more able to give positive criticism, which consisted of letting others know “you are just trying to help them” rather than “bash anyone’s feelings or hurt them” (Sonia interview, p.8). The manner of criticizing others was all-important to her, Sonia asserting that “you have to be nice about it” and “learn how to do it in a positive way” (Sonia interview, p.8).

Alexandria defined tolerance as ‘listening and seeing both sides’ and says it will help her later in life “to deal with different types of people in work where there is going to be someone that you don’t like but you are going to have to work with them anyway” (Alexandria interview, p.13).

Teachers reiterated the students’ views on the impact of creative drama on tolerating different perspectives and viewpoints. Bonny attributed this co-operation on a common project

where students “start to learn to value differences and learn that some people communicate differently” (Bonny interview, p.6). This greater tolerance on the part of group members was extended to include physically-challenged students. As Bonny noted “they tend to accept them as they do anybody else”, dealing with each individual according to his/her personality rather than the handicap” (Bonny interview, p.6). Tania also identified the connection between creative drama and the students’ greater tolerance, particularly in becoming “much better listeners” (Tania interview, p.6). Generally teachers’ comments supported those of the students.

In essence, teachers supported students’ comments indicating that being involved in creative drama courses gave students confidence not only in dealing with their peers but also in other curriculum courses such as having more creativity in presenting papers in front of their peers. Hence, creative drama students had more confidence and creativity because it offers “independent thinking” and “planning” (McCaslin, 1968).

Following is a summary of findings:

**Table 2**

**Summary Statement on Themes/Findings:**

<b><u>Themes</u></b>	<b><u>Findings</u></b>
<b><u>Individual Characteristics</u></b>	
Self-confidence and Self-esteem	Students: builds self-confidence and hence better self-image. Diana: Since taking drama I can just go and talk to somebody without feeling stupid or weird or anything
Assertiveness	Teachers: Students are less inhibited and more open about their feelings and emotions. Students: Helps students express their opinion and speak their mind. Sonia: you have better relationships...you say what you really think...speak your opinion and just not be afraid to say how you feel...if something is bothering you. Teachers: Students understand themselves better and stand up for their rights.
Regulating Emotions	Students: Control and express emotions in an acceptable way. Rana: restraining feelings and redirecting them in a positive way worked better than yelling and screaming. Teachers: By being able to regulate their emotions, they become more willing to listen to others and discuss things.
<b><u>Interactive Characteristics</u></b>	
Democracy	Students: More discussion, negotiating occurs. Paul: if there is something that we cannot settle on...we will take a vote. Teachers: They did not talk directly about democracy. They indicated that students had to share that they are not the only ones that have ideas but other people do too.
Communication	Students: Improve ability to express themselves effectively. Diana: I feel I can speak with other

- people and I can better express myself.
- Respect**
- Teachers:** Communication is vital since students have to learn to speak and listen to others, rather than be passive recipients of information.
- Students:** They develop an appreciation of each other's worth. Lack of rigid structuring in drama education enables students to be more creative and more accepting of differences.
- Paul:** we see that everybody listens and they don't judge you or criticize you.
- Empathy**
- Teachers:** More understanding of other people's feelings.
- Students:** Drama activities enables them to imagine themselves in the shoes of other characters to see and feel things from another perspective.
- Alexandria:** I am able to understand what other people are thinking and feeling.
- Teachers:** Students become more attuned to other people's feelings. They often use role-playing to deal with real-life crisis situations.
- Flexibility**
- Students:** Being able to understand another person's view point also enables one to be more flexible and open to change.
- Sonia:** You have to use your own individuality but you have to listen to other people too.
- Teachers:** Students became more flexible and willing to accept different opinions after being involved in various group projects.
- Tolerance**
- Students:** Since there is a lot of peer evaluation in drama, students learn how to give and receive criticism in a positive way.
- Rana:** Compromise is the thing that you bring home with you.
- Teachers:** Students start to learn to value differences. They learn that some people communicate differently.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### Discussion of Findings

The main purpose of this study was to examine secondary school students' perceptions of drama and its effect on their social interactions. The main research question was as follows: Does creative drama enhance social interaction among high school students? To answer this question, I examined the attitudes and behaviour of a group of six students who were enrolled in a creative drama class. Student responses to the study were supported by three creative drama teachers. The most significant finding of the study is that there is a clear connection between learning that takes place in dramatics courses and students' personality development. Inextricably linked to social awareness and sensitivity is an increase in personality development. Active participation in creative drama leads to positive gain in personal qualities such as poise, self-confidence, and self-esteem, as well as in interpersonal qualities such as empathy, tolerance, and adaptability. Clearly, it is a synergistic combination that has individual and societal benefits.

This study supports the notion that there is a connection between learning in drama and personality development. However, students in grade ten seem to have greater difficulty in relating the social skills developed in creative drama class to their wider circle of family, friends, communities, and jobs. In contrast, students in OAC seem to find it easier to apply social skills such as communication, empathy, and negotiation to their wider social network.

The findings of this study are confirmed in the literature. Creative drama enables students to search for new possibilities within themselves and within the broader world (Brookfield, 1987, p.39). Through improvisation, role-playing, mime, and tableaux, students are able to empathize with the plight of others and become more understanding of the feelings of others. We have seen this when Tania recalled how students sympathized with their peers who could not deal with the theme of suicide and decided to change their project topic for him. Students were able to empathize with him. In another instance, Alexandria mentioned that through creative drama she learned about understanding people more. This was when they role-played a student who is seemingly having behavioural problems but in fact was suffering from a lot of anger and fear. In this instance the student learned to look beyond the outer appearance and in this case it was the students' behavioural problems. Creative drama also allows students to explore alternatives to existing, rote ways of thinking and reacting, thus widening their perspective 'to claims of universal truth' (Brookfield, 1987, p.9). As Diana had pointed out she found freedom in creative drama classes as she was able to express how she felt without being antagonized or ridiculed by others. Creative drama fosters in students an ecumenical attitude that life is full of possibilities and perspectives, that it includes people with a diversity of values and experiences, all with something to contribute. Bonny had given an example of how students adjusted to the needs of a disabled student who was involved in their project. Creative drama encourages students to explore alternative ideas and activities that they would otherwise never consider. As Rana mentioned creative drama fostered in her a possibility of being more tolerant to her siblings and more willing to listen and negotiate with them. It promotes a refreshing departure from

narcissism and selfishness and helps to build a more flexible and tolerant society, one that recognizes the reality that we are not all carbon copies of one another, and that our differences are sources of growth. As Brookfield (1987) points out, “for any effective communication to take place between people, there must be a readiness in those involved to try and understand each others’ perspectives (p.47). Clearly, creative drama helps establish this readiness among the participants by exposing them to situations different from their own.

Shuman (1978) cites Guffin, who related personality development to social interaction; he asserts that improvement in self-knowledge enables students better to understand and appreciate the attitudes of their peers (p.128). By incorporating creative drama into the curriculum, educators can draw upon its power to open minds and change lives; foster a generation of young people with a better understanding of themselves, and with a deeper knowledge of their own feelings, emotions, and attitudes, together with a genuine appreciation and valuation of other people. According to Barnfield (1968), the drama teacher begins at home, by focusing on the individual student’s personality and character. Then through creative dramatic education activities students are led outside themselves into the life, experience, and mind of the character they are portraying.

Creative drama helps students to become better negotiators and communicators; it enables them to be more articulate, and better able to express their own opinions and ideas. By being more in touch with their own feelings, and practised at speaking in front of an audience, they cannot help but develop into adults with poise and superior people skills. In the words of Heining and Stillwell (1974), “through communication the child learns to understand himself [or

herself], others, and his[her]culture” (p.6).

This study reveals that one notable benefit of participation in creative drama class is to improve a student's self-confidence. Thus, my study supports Yaffe's (1989) research on the personality development of at-risk and gifted students in elementary school setting through engagement in creative drama. Yaffe concludes that student self-confidence increases accordingly. The participating students subsequently proved to be more active learners with enhanced results. It seems that increased self-confidence promotes greater self-esteem, which also results in students dealing with their social environment in a more positive and productive fashion. In a real way, therefore, drama allows students to improvise, experiment, try on roles, accents and emotions in a safe, non-threatening environment. Being able to express their feelings in this setting, discouragement and frustration are lessened, and students are less likely to put down their peers. This conclusion is supported by Alexandria, Paul and Rana. As well, the more one practices an activity, the better one gets at it, the more accomplished one becomes; this is certainly the case with creative drama, where successes translate into enhanced interpersonal skills in the real world outside the classroom.

McCaslin (1968) asserts that creative drama provides an opportunity to create greater awareness among students. My study supports this view in the sense that students such as Rana and Diana can negotiate and vote on all issues they need to discuss within their group. Thus, because the group creates something together such as a skit, it learns a “valuable lesson in cooperation. Social differences may be forgotten in the business of sharing ideas and improvising scenes” (McCaslin, 1968,p.12). In such a common effort, students learn to



negotiate, vote, adapt to one another, and become more flexible. Albert (1994) cites examples of how improvisation in class allows students to create a variety of situations involving characters with different view points and conflicts. She indicates that these exercises enable students to project themselves into other people's personalities, forces the participants to problem-solve, negotiate solutions with one another, and reach mutual consensus.

This study suggests that younger students may find it difficult to generalize what they have learned from a specific situation. For instance when Diana was asked if creative drama helped her with her family relations, she answered that she did not know. By using some probes she was then able to answer the question indicating that she has become more understanding with her siblings. For students in OAC, it seems to be easier to recognize how these social skills are transferable and translatable. The significance of this finding is not clear to me at this point given the small size of the sample.

Merely because of more life experience, age does tend to develop in people a stronger sense of self and of values, and more confidence in speaking out in different social situations. The skills that are developed in drama class, including projecting oneself into other identities to create a convincing illusion of life, are significant accomplishments whether or not a student can intellectualize the process and the product.

To conclude, this study explored the correlation between creative drama and effective social interaction. The fundamental point is, drama works because the cognitive and affective domains are in dynamic unity, as opposed to the Piagetian (Piaget, 1952) view that they are separate though parallel systems. Drama is a thinking/feeling medium and for the students, the feeling

engagement has enriched their intellectual grasp on social interaction. They acquired invaluable interpersonal skills that will facilitate their entry into adulthood. If, as a result of creative drama class, these students have gained in self-knowledge and self-confidence, if they have become more tolerant of others, if they have learned to cooperate to achieve a common goal and to argue vigorously for their point of view while acknowledging group consensus, then they are on their way to being more socially adept citizens.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Although my study has shown unequivocally a link between the world of “drama class” and “real life” when it comes to social skill learning, yet I feel that this field is open for further research. Particularly in light of the limitations of this study. Thus far unspoken is a political component to this discussion. When all curricula are being rationalized and need to be justified, subjects such as drama, art, and music may seem to be expendable. But as I hoped to show in this study, creative drama is a subject of value to the school system and to society at large. If anything, it could be integrated profitably into more traditional learning medium areas as a pedagogical method via a wide range of creative dramatic activities such as skits and improvisation. In subject areas such as history and language not only would it give new life to old subjects currently taught in a traditional way, it would promote wider social interaction in school. It would provide school boards with tangible evidence of the connection between creative drama and the development of healthy social skills and a healthier, more tolerant society.

As Heathcote (cited in N.McCaslin 1981 p. 78) says in describing the benefits of drama:

It seems sensible to me that, if there is a way of making the world simpler and more understandable to. . . why not use it? (Drama as Education in Children and Drama by N. McCaslin p. 78).

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## APPENDIX 1

Ethics Approval

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13 March 1996

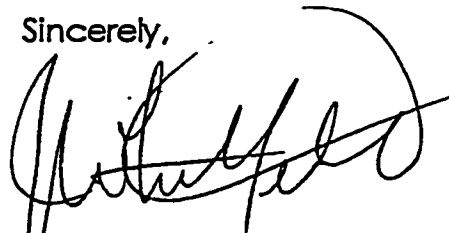
Ms. Nevine A. Yassa  
Faculty of Education  
Lakehead University  
THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO  
P7B 5E1

Dear Ms. Yassa:

Based on the recommendation of the Ethics Advisory Committee, I am pleased to grant ethical approval to your research project entitled: A STUDY ON THE EFFECT OF CREATIVE DRAMA ON SOCIAL INTERACTION.

Best wishes for a successful research project.

Sincerely,



ROBERT G. ROSEHART  
President



**APPENDIX 2****Consent Form For Students**

Dear Student:

My name is Nevine Yassa. I am a student at Lakehead University in the Master of Education Program, and I am conducting a study on creative drama and its effectiveness on social interaction. I invite your participation in this study.

The purpose of the research is to identify areas of creative drama which students perceive to be significant for influencing social interaction. There is no risk to you. In fact, this study may be beneficial to you as it may help you identify areas which influence your social interaction. Students will be asked what areas in creative drama they perceive to be influential on social interaction and why. Interviews will be tape recorded and will last approximately 60 minutes. Students reactions and attitudes will also be observed and recorded. However, students' real names will not be used during interviews or in the written portion. In order to ensure confidentiality of information obtained, interviews will be conducted in a private location that is both comfortable and accessible to you. For your information, participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time if you wish to do so. All original data collected will be held in confidence for a period of seven years, and then destroyed.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the attached consent form and return it to your school. Thank you for your cooperation and I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Nevine A. Yassa

Please detach and return the attached form to your school

### Consent Form

My signature on this sheet indicates that I agree to participate in a study by Nevine A. Yassa of Lakehead University, Ontario on the use of Creative Drama in schools. It also indicates that I understand the following:

1. I am a volunteer and can withdraw at any time from the study.
2. There is no risk of physical or psychological harm to me as a result of my participation.
3. The data I provide will be confidential.
4. I will receive a summary of the project, upon request, following the completion of the project.
5. I have received explanations about the nature of the study, its purpose, procedures, and I understand that all primary data will be held in confidential storage by Nevine A. Yassa for a period of seven years.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Consent Form For Parents**

Dear Parent:

My name is Nevine Yassa. I am a student at Lakehead University in the Master of Education Program. I am conducting a study on how creative drama influences students' social interaction. Your teenager has been asked to participate in this study. Your son/daughter will be interviewed along with a few other students. A total of approximately 8 students will be interviewed.

The information is being collected as part of a Masters of Education Degree. Dr. Fiona Blaikie is my advisor for this project.

Participation is completely voluntary and your son or daughter may withdraw at any time. There is no risk to your son/daughter. This study may prove beneficial to your son/daughter helping him/her to better understand the relations between him/her and classmates. Confidentiality and anonymity are assured in that at no time will your son's/daughter's name be used in any report resulting from this study. All original data collected will be held in confidence for a period of seven years, and then destroyed. Pseudonyms will be assigned. Your son/daughter has received a form that outlines a complete description of the project.

Kindly signify permission for your son's/daughter's participation by signing the attached form.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me or my advisor at the numbers listed below.

Thank you

Sincerely,

Nevine Yassa

Dr. Fiona Blaikie

344-5799

343-8222

---

PLEASE RETURN TO THE SCHOOL

— I give permission to my son/daughter —————to participate in the study described.

I understand the purpose of the study, and am aware that confidentiality will be maintained.

---

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

### **Consent Form For Teachers**

Dear Teacher:

My name is Nevine Yassa. I am a student at Lakehead University in the Master of Education Program, and I am conducting a study on creative drama and its effectiveness on social interaction. I invite your participation in this study.

The purpose of the research is to identify areas of creative drama which students perceive to be significant for influencing social interaction. There is no risk to you. In fact, this study may be beneficial to you as it examines the role of creative drama in social skills. This may help you in ameliorating social interaction among students especially among students with potential behavioural problems. Teachers will be asked if creative dramatics influences communication skills, and in what way (if any) drama affects the empathic skills of students. Interviews will be tape recorded and will last approximately 60 minutes. I will keep all original data in confidence for a period of seven years prior to its disposal. In order to ensure confidentiality regarding the information obtained, pseudonyms will be used, and names of schools and locales will be changed. Interviews will be conducted in a location that is both comfortable and accessible to you. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time if you wish to do so.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the attached consent form and return it to your school. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Nevine A. Yassa

Please return the attached form to the researcher.

### **Consent Form**

My signature on this sheet indicates that I agree to participate in a study by Nevine A. Yassa of Lakehead University, Ontario on the use of Creative Drama in schools. It also indicates that I understand the following:

1. I am a volunteer and can withdraw at any time from the study.
2. There is no risk of physical or psychological harm to me as a result of my participation.
3. The data I provide will be confidential.
4. I will receive a summary of the project, upon request, following the completion of the project.
5. I have received explanations about the nature of the study, its purpose, procedures, and I understand that all primary data will be held in confidential storage by Nevine A. Yassa for a period of seven years.

---

Signature

---

Date



### **APPENDIX 3**

#### **Sample Questionnaire**

#### **Interview Questions For Students**

##### **General**

1- Why did you opt to study drama?

- enhances social skills
- preparation for a career in drama
- for obtaining credit only (I can not use this as a candidate)
- influence by parents
- need to work on some difficulties of social skills
- effect on self-esteem

##### **Influence on various current relationships**

1- How does drama influence your interaction with your family?

- how to develop empathy to others
- development of tolerance to differences
- assertiveness in speaking one's mind
- ability to negotiate issues and solve problems
- adaptability and flexibility in approaches towards
- different situations and options

(the above points can be applied on the three levels such as home, school and society).

2- How did drama influence your relatedness to your classmates?

learning from each other as they analyze characters  
 comparing points of view  
 creating a story  
 ability to work in groups to achieve common goals while  
 maintaining one's individuality,  
 group interaction  
 effective socialization .  
 cooperative group behaviours  
 Sensitivity to others' problems, deficiencies  
 etc.  
 (these are applied in class only)

3- How did it influence your relatedness to people in  
 society (outside school).

Influence on different life aspects in the future

1- What sort of impact do you think drama will have on your  
 social life in the future?

- intimate relationships
- interaction with authority figures
- friendships

**2- How would studying drama influence your future career?**

- finding a job
- relationship at work with superiors, subordinates,

## **Interview Questions For Teachers**

### **1- Communication**

**How do you think creative dramatics influence communication skills among students?**

### **2- Effect on behavioral problems**

**Do you find any particular effect of drama on some behavioural problems exhibited by some students? If yes, in which way?**

### **3- Empathy**

**How does drama effect the empathic skills of students, if any?**

### **4- Egocentricity and ethnocentricity**

**There is a developmental tendency in teenagers to be more interested in their own lives than in the outside world. In your experience do you find that drama alters that attitude? if yes, in what way?**

### **5- Problem solving skills (personal and community)**

**Some literature suggests that drama may enhance students' abilities to deal with problems related to their personal issues or community problems, what is your experience of this?**

**6- Assertiveness**

**Some workers claim that drama could enhance assertiveness and self-esteem, what are your thoughts on this?**

**APPENDIX 4**  
**Student Interview Transcript**  
 by  
 Nevine A. Yassa

**Date:** April 17, 1996  
**Time:** 9:10 p.m.  
**Location:** H1 School the storage room for the drama class.  
**Setting:** It is an office with three chairs, a desk and a filing cabinet. There is a phone and a window overlooking the main road. Sometimes one would hear the listen to cars and buses going by. Also outside the office sometimes voices are heard outside. There is also a poster on the floor. Windows are opened so that natural light comes through. It is a drab room with no art work or pictures on the walls. Generally speaking in this in this room you are not interrupted by external noise but at intervals it happens.

**Weather:** Overcast, about 8C  
**Interviewer:** Nevine Yassa-(referred to as N)  
**Interviewee:** Rana is the interviewee's pseudonym (referred to as R)  
**Interview duration:** 10:15 - 11:00 a.m.

N is using an Interview Guide with questions. One audio tape recorder has been tested and is running. N is also taking hand-written notes. Both N and R have a convenient seating arrangement so that they can all see each other's face and speak comfortably into both other's faces. They are sitting in such a way so as to facilitate good eye contact. This is a non confrontational configuration.

Direct quotations are indented and square brackets are used to indicate observed comments during the interview. In some instances they are intended to improve understanding.

**N** Hi, my name is Nevine Yassa and I am a grad student here at LU and my thesis is on creative drama and I wanted to see if drama enhances social interaction or if it is a useless course. My first question would be why did you choose drama.

**R:** Because thought it would be fun and interesting to do and it is different than your regular classes where you just sit at desks and write kind of you sort of get involved more.

**N:** Where you encouraged by your parents to take this course.

**R:** They tell me just take whatever you want to take. They don't mind.

**N:** Was it more like a filling course for you just to get a credit.

R: No, there are other courses that I could have taken for that and I took this one because I find it is different.

N: Which grade are you in?

R: Grade 10.

N: Have you taken other courses in Drama before.

R: No, they are not offered.

N: So, it is your first course ever.

R: Yah.

N: How do you find it.

R: It is fun. Like right now we are doing a play where you just get an outline of it and you have to fill in everything. You have to arrange your set on the stage and everything. So, it is a lot of fun.

N: Oh, so, do you find that whatever you apply in drama effects your interaction with your family members.

R: Like I go home and I tell them stuff that we learned and did. Like my brother wants to take it when he is in high school and stuff.

N: When you talked about stuff that you took what were you talking about?

R: I tell them about the plays that we are putting on and about how we get to play and plan them all and write them and they think that this is really good that we are not just given a script and say OK this is it. We have got to actually make it our own. So, it is more...it is better...it is fun that way because you get to make it your own personal story kind of instead of just and ...

N: Do you work in groups?

R: It is fun because I know most of these people in my class so it is easy to work with rather than somebody you don't know and you can talk to them more instead of just kind of ...well I don't know you I can't give an idea. So, it is better that you know them.

N: Where you faced with situations that some of the members of your group would not agree with you?

R: It happens quite often....I don't know...like we vote a lot if there is something that we can not settle on we will take a vote...

N: Within your group?

R: Yah, and if this is the way it goes or whatever or else we will try to use part of the idea and incorporate it into the story and maybe not the whole idea if somebody does not like it.

N: And who came up with the idea of voting.

R: um we thought of the lead of the play...and my friend ... said OK let's vote.

N: So, you came up with the idea within your group.

R: Yah, Yah

N: It is more like politics.

R: Yah, Yah.

N: How do these qualities that you have learned in your drama class such as listening to others, being open to other people's ideas...how do you take these qualities when you are at home...how does this apply to your family relationships.

R: Well...

N: Do you have any sisters or brothers...

R: Yah, I have five younger sisters and brothers...well I guess it helps that I can listen to them now and if they have any idea I am not going to just go Ok, Ok, I would actually listen to them and hear them out instead of just ignoring them.

N: You actually do that...

R: Yah, like my brother tells me something and usually I would go Ok and lately I have been listening to him and sometimes it is kind of interesting.

N: Does it not depend on the way he says things to you.

R: Yah, if he is mean about and then I am not going to list to him and if he is nice I would listen to him.



N: How would you deal with him being mean. How would you deal with a situation like that.

R: I don't know... we fight a lot.

N: How about if you find somebody mean at you within your group?

R: I don't know ...like yell at them [laughing]. We have got into a couple of yelling [laughing].

N: And how did they end up?

R: They end up Ok, we usually ...one person usually gives in. We say we will try to do that but then we try to change that...and see if they are happy.

N: You have learned to compromise.

R: Yah, it is hard doing that because you don't always want to given in to what you don't want.

N: How about when you are in a group do you find you are able to say your opinion and say your ideas?

R: Yah, I think I am able to do that it is easy to do that for some people it is not so easy.

N: Do you attribute this to drama or is your nature?

R: No, this is my nature...like I don't care what I say. I can say my opinion and not care what other people think about me.

N: Do you have to watch what you say, the way you say it?

R: Yah, sometimes like if you don't want to hurt somebody's feeling sometimes you have to kind of say it differently [laughing].

N: Do you think you have learned anything in drama that would help you with the way you communicate?

R: I think it has made me a little bit more open like a little bit easier to say things out loud to be able to speak and to be able to do stuff like if we are doing improve or something I can go up easily now and just act like without worrying about people laughing at me...

N: More self-confidence...

R: Yah, totally, yah a lot

N: Do you attribute this to drama you think?

R: Some of it, like before I was a little scared of people, ha, ha, like you...and now who cares if they laugh at me...if that is what we are supposed to be doing.

N: Why the change? How did it happen.

R: I don't know it is just that um it is easier in drama because you are supposed to act that way. You are supposed to not act like yourself. You are supposed to act the person of the character. So, it is easier to say well it is drama well you can act like that kind of thing [laughing].

N: Did you find that what you have learned in drama... you have been doing drama for how many months...?

R: three months...

N: Did you find what you have learned in drama helped you with your family members. You talked to me about learning how to compromise and listening to other people and having more self confidence and I was wondering if you were able to take them with you home.

R: Compromise definitely and compromising with your parents about things becomes easier and then they start to compromise too like not just stick to their rule like if you are tell them how about to extend the curfew half an hour and then they will say fifteen minutes and then you will say ok so it is compromising the thing to bring home.

N: Do you think...before these three months what would have been your reaction?

R: I would be like NO I am just staying out [yelling]. Like I would not have given in ...I don't know ...it wasn't the same.

N: What about relationships and conflicts between sisters and brothers?

R: My sisters and brothers are really young so only a couple of them that I have to compromise with about borrowing things and stuff like that because my brother would like some of my CD because he does not have any and I tell him you can't borrow my CD's until you get your own and then I can borrow his and... he would say No and I say Ok and I give him some of my CD's so he can borrow some of my CD's now.

N: How would you deal with anger?

R: I would just say leave me alone and unless you talk normally to me I am not going to listen to you. I am not going to listen to you yelling at me.

N: So, you are able to express yourself in a positive way. How do you find drama effect your relatedness to your classmates. For instance, what happens in a group dynamics when you create a story.

R: Um you end up ...some of them actually have a lot of good ideas in their head but they are scared to get them out. They are a little weary that people make fun of them and stuff [somebody opens the door and interrupts the interview.

N: Sorry about the interruption. You were saying about other people's ideas

R: Yah, people that you would have thought that did not have any ideas, they have very good ideas and holy like you have that idea. You get surprises from a lot of people.

N: Do, you attribute to the kind of security that they feel within a group.

R: Yah, the smaller the group, the more willing to give out their ideas, the bigger the group, it is kind of I don't know...[laughing].

N: When you are in group you told me that you have to compromise so you give in and then what happens to your own personality.

R: Um when you give in I am like um I guess we have to do that but you are willing to change to make the play works like say you can show your classmates you that you are able to do that... you don't want them to think that you are that stuck up person who just wants every thing by themselves, you don't want them to think that. When you compromise they think Oh well she is willing to do that so next time maybe I give in to her...it is kind of a mutual thing there.

N: Um and you find the benefits because you are doing it and then another person will do the thing for you and the group will be able to go on.

R: Yah.

N: What about...role playing did you play roles of people who have deficiencies and learning disabilities and behavioural problems.

R: We only have done two plays and in the first one I just play a kind of western girl ...and the second one I did lighting and I think it is a little too heavy for grade 10 for our first year I think we need to work on the basics first and then move up to that because I mean if we did it right now people would just find it funny and it is not so they would just laugh and it is kind of

mean if you play it in that sort of dumb way you have to just do it sort of the right way that would bring emotion to people.

N: And what do you think is the right sort of way.

R: It has to be kind of funny because you don't want people to totally just be like um um just totally sad the whole time but it can hilarious like you can't make the person do dumb things that people would just laugh at in the audience you have to make ...you actually have to make them a person and not just something that is on stage.

N: And you have not reached this point yet.

R: No.

N: Ok, I understand. You said that you are working on scenes and that you are actually creating a story. Um so did you have an opportunity of analyzing characters. Do you create characters?

R: Some are given to us like basics of the story were given to us ...like four characters have to be in the play but like the rest of them you have to make up and put them into your play or something.

N: Can you give me an idea about how to go by creating this character.

R: Well what we did was we thought out a basic out line of the story and just basic things that we wanted to include in the story and then we added characters in that would ...that we would need to have to make these scenes work and we just said like who would like to do this character or that character\..\ and everyone has a character now.

N: How would you decide like this character has to be really nice or mean, happy, sad um or such and such a situation...this should be the action of the character...how did you go by doing this?

R: We think about the play and we think whether or not this person is mean and look at what the personality of the character is and what part he is playing. In this play, I am a witch like a soccer kind of thing and I have to be mean and wicked and everything...

N: I presume that this is not your nature...

R: No.

N: So how would you put yourself in the shoes of this person?

R: We just have to ...I don't know...I think about things that are mean and that makes it happen. The costume also kind of puts you into the character more and it makes you think that you are really the character and it is easier to act that way and just a ...when people...when the story is going you want to act mean to show the audience what a good show you have and how ...and to show them what a good actor you are or actress.

N: Do you find it difficult trying to put yourself in somebody's else character?

R: It is but if you ...like when you are first rehearsing it is hard like you are kind of joking around and laughing for a while...like Oh I can't do this and then after a while you get into it and you have fun with it...

N: How does it help you with understanding with people in real life?

R: I wouldn't want to be like that [referring to the mean character the interviewee is playing]. Like this is No way to go. You need to enjoy everything in life and if you end up being a witch like or mean like you will not have any friends. No body will really like you will just ...it wouldn't be much fun at all.

N: But will it help you understand people who are mean more. For instance, if you see somebody doing a mean action will this help you understand why they did it?

R: Sort of I think I would kind of understand why they are doing it. I mean you would go like Oh maybe that is why they are doing it. They kind of have to have a reason to do it not just for nothing just to be mean. They actually have a reason to be doing it. So, you kind of like well maybe if you talk to them and then maybe they'll start being nice. Maybe they will change.

N: Do you think you will continue to take drama?

R: Yah, definitely.

N: I wanted to ask you what do you think what sort of impact drama will have on your social life in the future. What I am thinking about you know intimate relationships, boy friends, girlfriends, this is one thing and then interaction with authority figures, parents, bosses managers?

R: I think it would make me more open to be able to express my feelings to say what I am thinking and not just keep them buried down inside and then the compromise comes up again. It ...like if you want a raise from your boss or something then you compromise with him maybe. This becomes really handy and stuff like this. More open for sure... especially with boyfriend and stuff like you can say with him like you are not going to say oh I am not going to say that because maybe he will dump me ...this way.

N: What about saying something that might hurt him.

R: Like there are something that you have to keep to yourself. Because if you say them you can really hurt them and you don't want that to happen.

N: What do you do in a situation when you have to say something and it will hurt?

R: Yah, you just have to say it nicely and you have to break it easily and you can't just cut it out and say and walk away...like you have to talk about it afterwards and make sure that everything is OK and you have to say it nicely and easily and stay calm.

N: Do you think drama taught you to be calm.

R: No, I don't think so I have always had this in me.

N: Um what about studying drama and your future career. Does drama help you for instance when you go for an interview?

R: It will make is easier to answer questions um you will be able to express your feelings ... like I would like to be a lawyer so you know it will make me more open to talk to people and to be able to relate to people that I represent.

N: Do you work.

R: Yah I just got a job.

N: When did you get it.

R: End of March.

N: This is after you have begun your course of drama.

R: Yes.

N: Ok, I want to know if drama helped you with your relationships with your superiors and subordinates at work.

R: Um before I would have just sat there and waited for them to talk to me but I can go out now to them and say Oh Hi how are you like...and stuff that I start talking to them. At first you can start talking to them about work kind of what it is like to work here and you then you kind of move up to so what are you doing this weekend and stuff like it is easier to talk to somebody that you don't know and like I work at Robin's Donuts and it is easier to talk to customers too like when they come in and they want to talk to you. Some people do that. It is easier to talk to them

because I mean you have more self confidence in yourself.

N: What about your relationships with your peers. Did you have any conflicts?

R: No not yet...I was not in that much because I play soccer and I kind of ...I have lots of things to do and the people I work with go to school and so we hadn't any problems yet. There are a couple of times that it got pretty busy and they were yelling at each other ...come here and stuff but it was the spur of the moment.

N: How did they deal with this yelling... was it anger?

R: No they were not mad they were like that is just you need to do when it gets like this and\.\. They tell you what you do wrong and what you do right. So, when they tell you that you are right it gives you a big boost.

N: What about when they tell you that you are wrong?

R: Well Ok I learn. I will not do that anymore and try to not to do it next time.

N: Do you think drama has anything to do with that. I am just thinking about working in groups and you have done a lot of group work at drama and now you are work...and you have to deal with colleagues. How does this effect your relationship with them.

R: It is easier for them to tell you are doing something wrong because at the end when we do a play in drama you put them out for everybody and they write a comment about you so... if there is something bad you find that you can take it easier because they are just giving you like that if...like good criticism like something that you are going to correct next time. They are not trying to be mean but it is just something that you should work on and they are just giving you their opinion.

N: Do you find their comments mean.

R: No, like they are mostly nice comments and they would be like could give a little bit more ideas, could um I don't know...they just say stuff like that and you say Ok I will give more ideas...\\.\

N: So, when you take this with you to work. Do you find it the same with the people at work.

R: Because when they tell you something they'll say Oh you need to load the dishwasher different this time because it didn't really work well this time\.\ Ok and I am going to do it next time.

N: You are more accepting.

R: Yes You are more accepting to criticism.

N: Is this your nature or is it the qualities of drama that you have learned help you?

R: Some of it is my nature but I used to be a little bit more intolerant I guess you could say to criticism ...I and now I am more open to it.

N: What about if your boss says something like you have to come a certain shift and you have an exam um and even when you made your point he/she does not understand what would you do.

R: I would try to compromise like say if you give me that day I will work two days for it or say what if I make my own arrangements like somebody else to work for me maybe without having her to do it...I will always try to compromise.

N: Would you say that these are things that you have learnt.

R: Yah, compromise definitely comes out that is one thing I have learned in drama.

N: How old are you?

R: I am fifteen almost sixteen.

N: How would you feel what you have taken in drama will help you with other courses.

R: When you have to do a presentation in front of a class maybe it will boost your confidence to go up there and give a presentation. Just your self-confidence to go up there and do good without worrying about what other people think of you.

N: Do you work in groups in other classes.

R: Sometimes and they are usually four...

N: Do you find a difference between the groups in drama and the groups in these other courses.

R: It is different because some people in history for instance do not want to do the work. They give all the work to one person and they will say can you do it and I will copy it off you or something like that but in drama everybody is helping and everybody is giving their ideas and you must be part of it.



N: How would you deal with that.

R: You just say No and you say you better do it now because I am not going to do it and just let you copy it because I mean you are not going to learn anything from that.

N: So, you are able to speak up your mind. Do they get angry.

R: A lot of times they say Ok fine and...they start doing it ...this is laziness.

N: But you are finding a good way to deal with it.

R: Yah.

N: And you are not hiding your emotions.

R: No.

N: Now I would like to see how drama helps you develop your abilities in a social context. So [interrupted by a sound of a car which is very obvious because the office windows were opened] I will give you an example of two people quarreling in front of you. How would you deal with that.

R: Most time I would like to leave them work it on their own. It is their problem and if you don't know anything about the problem then obviously you are not going to try and help because you will make things worse or you could make them mad at you. Why are you doing this like mind your own business but if you knew what the problem was you will try ...like let just stay calm and try and work this out and sort of...like just help them with that and then try and help them work it out on their own.

N: Will you be talking to them.

R: Yah, but you should not try and solve their problem for them you should let them try and do that on their own.

N: What if a friend came over and he or she had a friend with them that you really don't like.

How would you deal with the situation. You were supposed to meet this girlfriend or boyfriend and then he is getting somebody that you do not really like.

R: Usually you just go with it and you try to be nice to them like you just Oh Hi, and but you are not going to be talking very much as you will be talking with the person that you do like. you are just going to ....you are not going to totally ignore them...you are going to make them feel that they are welcome but not too welcome.

N: Will that anger your friend.

R: But they would know that I don't like that person so if they would bring that person to me than they are kind of risking that.

N: How would they know?

R: Because I would tell them.

N: How would you tell them?

R: We always tell this to each other and usually like Oh I don't like this person and Oh but I do usually we then do things separate. You say it nice and you tell them why you don't like this person and the things that he or she has done that makes you not to like her like if you have No reason to like somebody this is not a good reason you have to have a reason and you should tell it to the person.

N: Um I am thinking now how would drama help you control the biology of your body i.e. the hate, the anger, sometimes if you like to scream..

R: It makes you more open so you are able to say things calmly without like going to screaming and yelling you are able to control them because you know that this is not right and self confidence and so you are able to talk to them without yelling you try to keep calm.

N: Was a situation in life that made you use drama. You talked about a lot of qualities such as compromise, openness, controlling yourself, your assertiveness when you speak your mind and i was wandering where you faced with situations where you had to use these qualities.

R: A couple of weeks ago I was arguing with a friend in the hallway and we started yelling and finally I walked away but the next day I returned and told her...and we talked about what that she had done that made me so mad and she apologized and she told me why she has done it and I told her why I have done it and so it was easy to talk to her. Like I should not have yelled at her and I did that so I went back and talked to her calmly and openly to make..and we are friends again. So, I think that worked better than yelling and screaming.

N: Did you learn these qualities in drama or at home?

R: In drama because the teacher talked to us about controlling your emotions \.\.

N: What about home are you open at home..

R: Not much my parents are separated and we just talk about stuff that we need to talk about

like some people talk about stuff with their parents but I don't like to do that.

N: Do you think you will continue taking drama courses.

R: Yah! I am going to take it next year.

N: Because you are thinking of taking a career as a lawyer...you think that will help you.

R: Yak, totally because you have to have self confidence and more openness with people you will tell them things that you need to tell them and things like that.\

N: You would have had a very good practice. Ok I would like to thank you very much for your time and for giving me all this valuable information. Thank you very much.

## Teacher Interview Transcript

by  
Nevine A. Yassa

Date: April 18, 1996  
 Time: 10:15 - 11:00 a.m..  
 Location: H2 School, first floor, administration offices  
 Setting: It is an office with three chairs, a desk and a filing cabinet. There is a phone and a window overlooking the main road. A lot of traffic going by outside. There is also a poster on the floor. Windows are opened so that natural light comes through. It is a drab room with no art work or pictures on the walls. Generally speaking in this in this room you are not interrupted by external noise but at intervals it happens.  
 Weather: Overcast, about 5C  
 Interviewer: Nevine Yassa (referred to as N)  
 Interviewee: Tania is the interviewee's pseudonym (referred to as T)  
 Interview duration: 10:15-11:00

N is using an Interview Guide with questions. One audio tape recorder has been tested and is running. N is also taking hand-written notes. Both N and T have a convenient seating arrangement so that they can all see each other's face and speak comfortably into both other's faces. They are sitting in such a way so as to facilitate good eye contact. This is a non confrontational configuration.

Direct quotations are indented and square brackets are used to indicate observed comments during the interview. In some instances they are intended to improve understanding

N Hi, my name is Nevine Yassa and I am a grad student here at LU and my thesis is on creative drama and today is April 18, and it is almost 10:20 a.m. um as you know I am interested in looking at creative drama and its effect on social interaction among students. [T nodding to confirm agreement]. So, my first question would be how do you think creative dramatics influence communication skills among students.

T: Oh, creative drama ... communication is creative drama and drama is creati... is communication um the whole basis for drama is that people communicate together to be able to produce something that they are proud of that or something creative that they can produce together and share with another group um it is a very its ..I don't know how you can talk about creative drama with it not being communication, it is the whole purpose of the course, so it does not just influence communication skills it is it is teaching communication skills.

N: So, what changes do you see in your students... what developments do you see going on.

T: Well, they become a lot more tolerant at each other's ideas, they certainly like to listen better. They are much better listeners um, they learn to speak or give their ideas in a more coherent way um. They learn to share um that they are not the only that have ideas, other people do to. They learn also that their ideas might be important there are ideas to listen to as well. They learn how to communicate better in a group. After they finish a course like this, they understand how important it is to work together as a group.

N: Did you see any changes in the group dynamics.

T: Yah! after they are through, they understand that they become more critical in a positive way of each other. They are very open about saying well you've already talked for ten minutes, now can I give you some of my ideas or maybe your leadership arise that certain students will have leadership um so a leader in a group might be more aware of the fact that one person hasn't spoken for a while and they will say well maybe this person has an idea do you have any ideas to contribute and open up the floor for someone who might be more shy and... and just waiting for someone to say hay to you have an idea but is too afraid to speak upon their own. And so, Oh, there is a lot of change even just in the five months of the course that you see that at the beginning they come in very chaotic and very disjointed and ...and through group dynamics they learn how to work together much better.

N: There is more respect.

T: There is more respect, more understanding of other people's feelings um they learn how to be ...how to be more positive in their criticism of other people. The teenagers are often just say ah you know he is a jerk you know ...

N: Cool

T: Yah, very cool...and very...they don't think about that other people might have feelings and after even just a semester they realize that is not a nice way of ... maybe he is a jerk but you should say you know what is really wrong what really bothers you about this person be more specific and it there a way you can tell him in a positive way that his behaviour has to change if he wants to continue working your group...uah...

N: Do you think they are aware of these changes that happen within them.

T: They are certainly aware of what we are looking for in the course for them. They are aware of it because we make it very structured and say to them this is what good skills you should have. Sometimes we would brainstorm together with the group and we would say, when you work in a group what is important for us to do when we are working together in a group, well they always say it is important to do this and this. They know all the things that are important and then we say well this is the stuff that you should be doing when you are working

as a group and they go ahead and work. So, I think by the end they are aware of what skills they need to work in a group so they know that whether or they ...they are perceptive enough to realize that this is stuff that they have learned that they can carry through with them for the rest of their lives...I don't know. Some of them are awfully young fifteen, sixteen thing. I don't know if they realized themselves if they changed at that point. Somewhere in their high school career maybe they realize but right at that point well they know that they have to listen better...they have to ...that there is responsibility to the group they have learned that but if they are aware of it themselves I think they are still too young a lot of them to understand that. By that time they graduate in grade 12 there is many of them that come back and say that drama has been the most fulfilling subject that they have learned so much about themselves in drama but not ...

N: [N interrupted here] but don't you think that you plant the seed that the fruits are seen afterwards.

T: Oh absolutely... we certainly see the change...whether or not they know that they have changed...like you say you plant the seed with the first tree when you have them and then it develops as they become older and by the time they graduated they certainly um they have certainly grown in a lot of those skills that we teach. um...

N: What about you know creative drama and its effect on behavioural problems. Do you find any particular effect drama has on some behavioural problems of students.

T: Um ok um ...Oh. I am trying to think back. I could talk about certain specific occurrences. Students that are very um that are kinesthetic learners they are very active they can't sit still they are usually labeled behavioural problems in classes like English or Math or classes where they have to be sitting all the time and for them to sit for an hour and fifteen minutes is a very difficult thing. In drama um with certain discipline and underlining a rule, they can learn actively um within parameters of course there are things that you can not do and I guess they learn that they learn that they still can be active they can still get up there and do all kinds of physical movement and stuff but within certain guidelines. You can do this in this class but there is a limit to where you can take it and a lot of those kids really work well in drama, they are very creative because they can get up and move around and their creativity comes out that way as opposed to just sitting in a classroom not...not doing... those kids need to think on their feet and that opportunities are not offered for them in other classes whereas certainly they can think creatively on their feet in drama and so creative drama allows them to do that. but also allows them to do brainstorm ideas all over and that again isn't as...it is not ...as we are not aware of that happening in a lot of those other classes where their ideas have to be put on paper and they can't be just vocal and in drama you can do these ideas vocally and they feel successful in a drama course whereas they wouldn't feel successful in other classes and so just that feeling um I think changes a lot of behavioural problems because a lot of behavioural problems are tied in with kids not feeling successful and not being able to move around and feeling stifled you know

so in that sense drama does change a lot of behavioural problems for those kids. It is just a different kind of discipline that we teach and it appeals to those students um...

N: You think that students that usually have problems with other courses like as you said...as you mentioned English or History where they have to sit down... they often do not have problems with drama or they have different kinds of problems.

T: They have different kinds of problems um I mean the problems do not go away. Sometimes they are even bigger because they see a bigger space and they can go crazy but there...

N: There is no structure...

T: Well, they assume there is no structure. There certainly is a structure. It is very structured but it allows them a different kind of learning method...a different kind ... because it is a different kind of teaching method, it is a different learning that they can do and a lot of those kids succeed very well in drama and they have a difficult time in academic subjects where there is ...where the written work is much more important whereas in drama the written work is almost as a result of what you have done on stage, then you can sit down and write a little bit in your journal or keep a character sort of a sheet going but um but the actual physical work is what is important, the working with the group, the communication and then ultimately what they do on stage is what great for them because they can express themselves verbally and that is what they want to do and they find out that they are not so dumb after all.

N: what about something like anger for instance...um how do you find students um if they problems with anger how do they deal with it...

T: We handle each situation individually as it happens. We have had some very difficult students come through um what we try to do is work first you know with lots of teacher and student communication um we sit down...a lot of it is almost like counseling where you sit down and talk and ask what made you angry is there another way that you can handle anger in here instead of putting your fist through the wall...well no...not that is what they did but we look at other ways that you could deal with the anger and you know sometimes withdraw on their own they just come away from the group and a lot of the anger is stemmed maybe from the group not communicating as well as it should um and then obviously the anger happens in such a way that it is disruptive to the group so we have to sit down as a group together and do some counseling and that is where teacher's role is. It is very important to counsel the other students how we can help him with his anger or her how we can solve this problem that will satisfy everyone in the group that everybody can be happy and not just one person just feels that they are always being picked upon and that they have this kind of frustration.

N: What if conflicts occur...what is the dynamics behind that.

T: A lot of it is me the teacher...I kind of have to be prepared to kind of jump in and it is really important to know your students and to really uhm... know ...

N: [interrupted] and their limits...

T: And their limitations and if there really is a problem that it can get so bad than sometimes like I have said you have to withdraw the student and just deal with that one student on one on one and then if it really becomes bad than there is the guidance office and the counselors and they can deal with it but drama is I mean that is the first place and you should be able to handle it there um because that is where it is so important right that they learn to work together and the learn to handle anger in a way that is not violent that they should be able to say to the group I am not having a good day and quite often they do that they come in and say I am not having a good day today and some of the group dynamics can get to a point where they can be so sympathetic and say what is your problem maybe we can help, it becomes almost like a therapy for a lot of those students...they look forward to the class because they can relieve a lot of the restrain they share.

N: I hear that from a lot of students um Ok we are going to talk about empathy. How do you think drama effects empathetic skills of students.

T: Well just what I said there, they become more aware of other people and more attuned to just because I am having a bad day does not mean somebody else is having a bad day too and um that they become aware of it ... of each other feelings, troubles and emotions and problems and I hate to make it sound like it is all what we do, that it is not just a therapy class but that in the process of working on a project they becomes more aware of each others feelings and sympathetic to each others problems you know teenagers I mean is one day a crisis and the next day is like it never happened. So, especially with girl friends and boy friends. We had lots of times where girls would come in and they would be crying because their boyfriend dumped them and you know the group , they come in and they help around you know they get her mind of things talking about what they are working on and sometimes they even act out their frustrations on the stage the characters that they choose to play are characters that are maybe characters that are going through the same sort of things that they are. That role play helps them out in relieving a lot of the frustration and again when you see something like that happening, you understand and you become more sympathetic to the character and then realize that this is maybe what the person is going through as well, so in the role playing situation it is just not good for the people playing it but also for the people watching it because then they can become more sympathetic to situations like that in real life.

N: Ok, there is a developmental tendency in teenagers to be more interested in their own lives than in the outside world. In your experience do you find that drama alters that attitude?

T: Very much so, developing...some of the tools that we use are things like...one aspect that we use in grade 11 where they have to develop characters that have real life problems and then



in those real life problems they have to bring the problem to a crisis point and then they ask the audience how they should finish this...how they should resolve...

N: The audience.

T: Yah! and the audience is the other half of the class and the class would say well she should do this and the decision that she should make and in the decision making they have to show that there are repercussions that there are results from a certain decision and if she makes a decision in one way than they will show what will happen what will other people become effected by the decision that this person makes and so it is a very tool and it is a great vehicle for them to see more like decisions that I make in my life will effect my family, my friends um maybe people that I work with people that I go to school with and so that sort of...that particular piece of drama that they do in grade in 11 is I think a very good one for them for that question that you just asked about how do they see that they are not...if they are so egocentric they think that anything that they do it does not effect anyone else but this particular drama vehicle that we use in the drama, they realize than that they do effect this one character the decision that has she made... a lot of them do very dramatic things like soap opera kind of stuff...the girl is pregnant and she is having an abortion should she give it up, should she keep the baby and so when the audience says she should give the baby up for adoption, so then ...the ones on the stage have to show that decision will effect her parents, her boyfriend and quite often they will go on and show twenty years later for the baby that she has given up for adoption the effect and her life twenty years later and how it has effected her. So, they start to see that one person's decision effects so many other people in their lives and so it does it gets them to look outside ...

N: And you do that in grade II.

T: That is grade 11 task that we do but they do lots of drama that ...that is serious drama like we say to them you know we give them a poem that works along a theme out um loneliness, or friendship or um sometimes they will touch on things like suicide even that they choose it themselves be it a wide range of themes and they will choose theme that they want to work on themselves and then they start to build from there. So, they will take a theme and then they will start building characters and a story line and then they will go into the actual rehearsal and planning. So, there is a lot of group work.

N: And do you do the same work in other grades or only grade II.

T: Well that particular task is in grade 11, grade 10 we do a lot of beginning working um lots of movement and working you know with other people so you will be able to hold hands with somebody else and not afraid to hug someone and not afraid to work together that way. Just to be open up more so they are not tense and always so. You always has to be so cool so you break down the cool barrier so you get them on the stage walking like ...they are walking on the moon or being animals or you know different puddles of mud and stuff so they behave totally differently in the drama classroom and they know it is OK...in the drama classroom and

um so we build on that in grade 10 and then they start to put together some little scenarios we give them a little scenario and they have to build play from there so in grade 10 the first one that they do is a kind of a western where they just the different tools in drama where they put together a play um then they do something called the accident where a child is killed in a street playing and they have to develop why and how did that happen and how the other children feel so that becomes a whole...so again we deal with a lot of social issues but they are hidden they don't understand ...they don't really see that is what we are doing until they have done it and then they say Oh yes yeah you know that girl is going to feel real badly because she was mean to that little boy when he was killed on the street and then they start to put two and two together and start ..it is not just that this is a social issue we are going to deal with it and you have to make a play around it. It is hitting them too hard on the head and it will turn them right off...Oh if you will say this is a social issue how are we going to deal with it in a play...it becomes too dry so you start the other way. You say well here is a scenario and somebody will say well these kids were playing on the street and then somebody gets killed, well how can you make the audience feel sorry for that little boy, Oh, maybe the kids were mean to him, why are the kids mean to him, well maybe because he is different than they are, Oh, well how was he different, well one group did that he was really fat and the kids would make fun of him because he is so fat and then he got killed and then they all felt badly because he was really a nice boy and they showed how each one of them could have done something nice for him and then you know maybe he would not have died and so then they realize then they start to say maybe we ostracize people because of how they look or because they are a little bit different than we are so they learn through the process of creating not that we teach them and then we say now create. They learn through the process.

N: Would you say that this would effect them through their life or is it limited to the class level.

T: I would hope that it effects through out their lives. At least in teenagers because in teenagers they are so egocentered. They are so self centered and hopefully that they start to see that this is a vehicle that teaches them to think outside of themselves and to see that other people have feelings that other people have hurt as well as they do. That they could actually create the hurt for these people as well.

N: We are going to go to problem solving, personal and community.

T: OK

N: Some literature suggests that drama may enhance students' abilities to deal with problems related to their personal issues or community problems, what is your experience of this?

T: Um specifically in the group work um because of course everybody is going to have ideas or when they come to a problem even doing something on the stage or um putting some things

together even building strait they have a problem and they to solve it as a group. So, how are we going to do this and as always in group dynamics we don't have such a big choice who we get in a class right we get a group of kids. Some groups will have lots of leadership and some groups will have no leadership but still the problem exists and so quite often if you just throw them together and um give them a problem and let them work at it they will eventually solve it um groups will solve it really well and some groups will fight over it for the longest time until finally they and quite often if you have too many leaders in a group it does not work because everybody wants it to go their way and so quite often I'll say they are all good ideas and you all have a point but it is already ten day s into the task and you have not even gone on the stage yet and how long are you keep doing this until you finally say OK we are going and go with this one and how are we going to solve this one and eventually they have to work it out and eventually they do because they realize they are running out of time and they have to work the problem out. So, in our evaluation we use a sheet that has a number of different group skills in there and they have to evaluate each other on things like listening skills and communicating, gives ideas, criticizes but in a positive way um there is order, you might be able to get the sheet from Sonia because she might have it that shows the kinds of skills that they have to have to be problem solvers and group skill workers so that those kids become very good and we heard from other teachers that they know that be grade 12 they can tell the kids who have had drama because they work really well in groups. They know that they appoint...people have their own role in a group there are those people who are the mediator, the timekeepers, the leaders, the people that become the secretary that write all the points down and will go over the points and say OK this is where we were and now can we keep going. This sort of the keeper of the folder because they keep all the work together and so that they um problem solving they will learn just through the experience of doing group work in the classroom in drama but it is again just like communication, problem solving is part of drama because you start off with a problem and now what do we do to solve this problem, how we are going to do that.

N: I am interested in knowing that other teachers realizes immediately who takes drama. Will students who have taken drama courses have a tendency in other courses to be more like leaders.

T: I think so, quite often especially English teachers because in English they do a lot of group work and they do a lot of presentations where they do group presentations and they say usually you can tell the ones that have taken drama, they are very comfortable in front of the rest of the class, they put lots of creativity into their presentation. They don't just go up there and read from a paper. Those are the kids that make the big posters, they wear the costumes, they bring in the props and they do a presentation that you love to watch because it is exciting because they have had a year or two of drama and they know that just standing up there with a sheet of paper reading from a sheet of paper is boring and they are going to bore the class. So, that they say, teachers would say that has got to be a drama student. If you put two or three of them in one group, you have got a dynamic presentation because they already know that just the presentation itself is wonderful but they also know the process of working in a group. They know that everybody's ideas should count, that you brain storm the ideas but then as a group you

collaborate on these ideas which ones we are going to use and they know building from that. Yeah, the leadership will be noticed and you see a lot of kids even... and in drama when I have a class of kids you mix the groups they never stay in the same group so they finish one group assignment that will take maybe a week and a half or ten days roughly and then I sort of observe I watch were the leaders are emerging in each group and I will shuffle them around. So, sometimes I would put all the quiet in one group just to see who emerges as a leader out of those quiet groups and quite often kids that would not talk before because all the really other leaders sort of take over so they step back and they let that person do the work. In a quiet group someone has to emerge or nothing happens and those kids quite often one would come out that has wonderful ideas, that there is a great leader but never would have spoken up because these are people were in the group and so they realize Oh I can do this, I can be a leader, I can give ideas and you know it is just... I think it is a self realization and self after realization in the process.

N: How would you say that it is drama and not family environment that is encouraging them to be outspoken and have empathy. Do you think it is both or do you think it is drama or...

T: It would be difficult for me to answer that question but I would not know a lot of the family environment for many of those students. You know parents...when I talk to parents the ones that do come in for drama a lot of them come in and say well tell me what it is that you are doing because all I hear about at home is drama I don't here about any other subject but drama, drama is this, drama we are doing this. They are excited about it and it is a way of expressing themselves that they have had that opportunity before. So, Yeah, the parents are really interested in what is happening because they hear about it so much and quite often parents would come in and they say they have seen such a change in attitude um just because they are so excited about school for a change and that they have not been excited about it for a long time. I hear that from parents that they are so excited about this course and even for example I have a last period grade 10 class drama. The weather is becoming wonderful and very few of them are skipping because they like the course they won't skip it. You know those kids skip other courses but they don't skip drama, they come to drama because they have already learned that they have a responsibility to the group and if they are not there the group can not function and they come back and kids would say where were you yesterday, you were supposed to be here, we are doing this and this and you were not here. So, they are pressure on them to be responsible and they like that. You know you have a responsibility to other people. Other people are counting on you, you have to be there. So, they learn that responsibility. But the thing with the parents...I know that we have had kids that had problems at home and drama is a good place for them like we said earlier it is a great place to relief stress it is a fair class for them. In a drama class they make friends much easier than they would in other classes because there is a lot more communication happening between them and so they make some lasting friendships um that maybe they would not make anywhere else and ...so I think yeah I wouldn't answer that 100% because I am not sure what happens at home but I know that in drama they certainly become more um more attuned to what is happening to them and to other people as well.

N: And they become closer...

T: And they become more aware of the skills that they do have. For instance in English, they know I can't spell or I can't write and in Math I know I can't add or subtract but in drama they realize that they have got maybe other skills out there that you need to survive that is not just the writing, the reading, the adding and they realize in drama jee I can...I work with people well I can talk to people and we can work together to put something...and those are skills that are life long skills and I guess they learn to be lifelong learners as well. That never stops and in drama you learn that you can learn from other people as well as from a book um.

N: Some teachers claim that drama could enhance assertiveness and self-esteem, so what are your thoughts on this?

T: Oh, definitely, self esteem because a lot of those kids who are not academic or who are very unsuccessful academically come into drama and find some place where they can succeed and that raises self esteem and that again would probably filter down into other classes because if they better about themselves, obviously they can feel better about themselves in other subject areas too. And with more and more teachers doing cooperative learning, and group work, those kids pick up skills in drama that they can transfer into other courses as well. Even independent study well a lot of senior courses they are working on independent studies were they have to do some research and compile there own ...that sort of work...you have also to be a motivated worker and sort of stuff we do that in drama as well and you have to be self motivated. You have to work together with the group and help motive the group, get the stuff going, get ideas going and that whole brainstorming kind of thing would help. Well, we have seen that quite often students would speak up and contribute in a drama class where they have been very quiet and non-committed in other classes and those skills I hope would transfer...

N: What about assertiveness?

T: Well, in drama that is part of a group skill. You contribute ideas even in one of the areas that we look at in evaluation is: contributes ideas, helps the group during the planning and rehearsal process, and that again should...tells them that standing up and saying something, or speaking or contributing ideas and having ideas to contribute is an important component of group work and so again those kids as I said before when they do presentation in an English class they are the ones that are a little more able to stand in front of a group of students and give a presentation and give a dynamic presentation and feel good about what they have done. Oh they are not....they are not shy about putting their hands up in class and asking a question that might be a little bit more...little deep and question the teacher on some aspect of literature you know that they...and they are not afraid to take on leadership roles in a group having these group dynamics they have already learned how to work in groups so that they be more assertive in working in groups in other subject areas.

N: Oh, that is great...I have lots of information. My last question I just would like to know

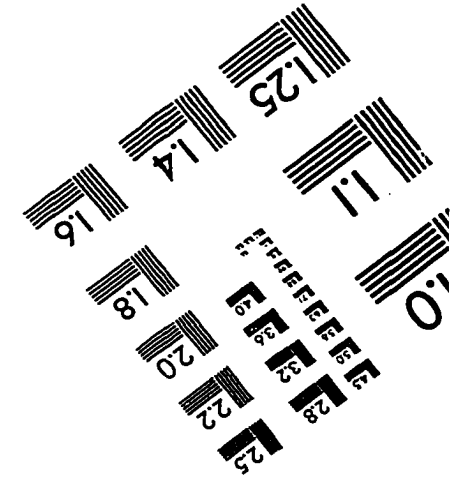
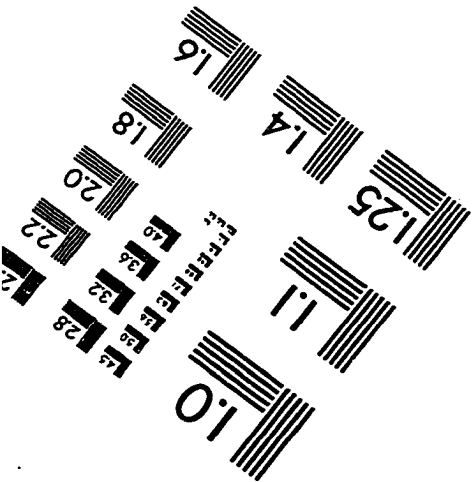
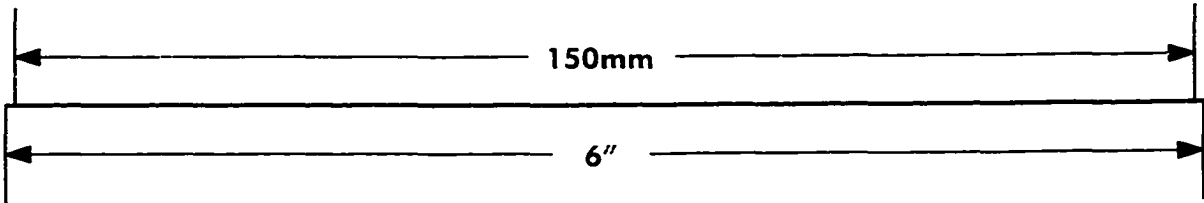
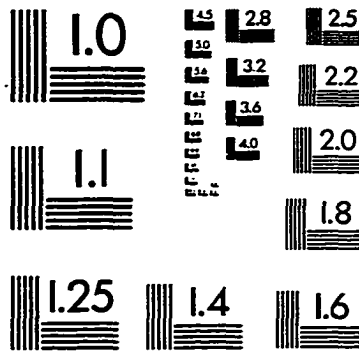
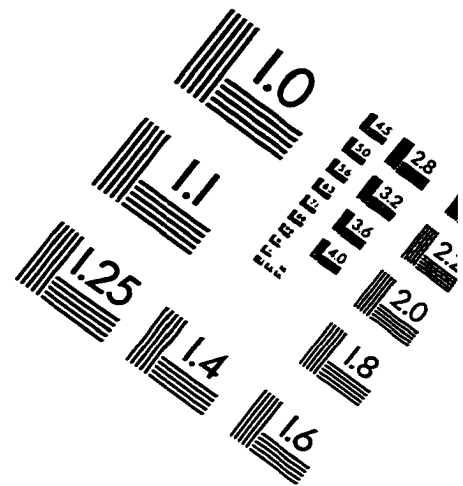
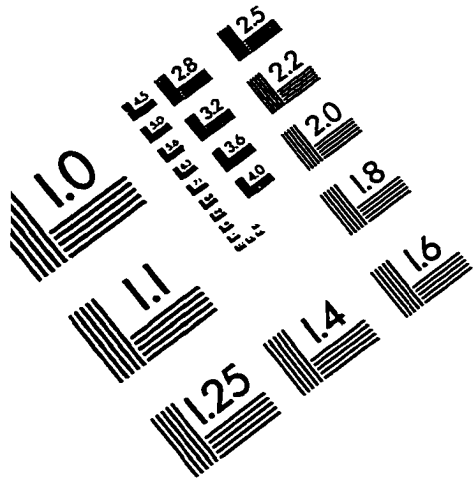
how many years having you been teaching drama?

T: 17 years.

N: Thank you very much for all this information. It has been very beneficial and thank you for your time.

T: Good. I am glad somebody thinks that drama is beneficial.

# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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