Developing Children's Creative Thinking Through the Arts

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Series Editor, Derek L. Burleson
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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 90-60216
ISBN 0-87367-303-4
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Bloomington, Indiana
This fastback is sponsored by the Tulare-Kings County California Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa, which made a generous contribution toward publication costs.
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Introduction

Children of all cultures and abilities can develop creative thinking skills through the fine and performing arts. The arts can engage children in creative thinking processes through the use of open-ended, problem-solving strategies and through a three-pronged approach consisting of exploration, creation, and appreciation. The arts areas that will serve as examples here are painting, music, dance, and drama.

In this fastback the authors will describe approaches and activities in the arts that non-specialist teachers can use to:

1. develop children's awareness, sensitivity, discrimination, appreciation, and creativity, and
2. focus children's attention on the nature of and interactions among art qualities.

The Arts as Subject Matter

Too often the role of the arts in the curriculum is viewed either as a diversion — a way to relax children before they settle down for the important business of academics — or as enrichment to liven up an otherwise pedestrian curriculum. Because of these attitudes, the arts are often considered a frill and are the first thing cut when fiscal problems arise. Our position is that arts deserve full and equal status with other curriculum areas. They should be studied independently and recognized for the contributions they make to the quality of life.
The arts objectify, clarify, and document feelings, moods, and ideas. Each art medium is a special language for expressing and appreciating these feelings, moods, and ideas. The fine and performing arts should hold a central place in the curriculum.

Strategies for Using the Arts to Develop Creative Thinking

In typical problem-solving approaches to learning, students attempt to find the correct answer, known to the teacher, or given in a textbook, or found in a database. The open-ended, problem-solving strategy used in the arts is quite different in that multiple solutions are possible and desirable. With this approach, the teacher's role is to define the problem as open ended. This requires children to engage in a continuous examination of the problem. This may be difficult for some children who are conditioned to only didactic teaching. They will need time and encouragement to adjust to the open-ended, problem-solving approach to the arts.

The open-ended, problem-solving approach is structured around three types of activities: exploration activities, creation activities, and appreciation activities.

Exploration activities focus on the development of skill in using a particular art medium. Through exploration children develop the ability to perceive and discriminate the subtle qualities that, separately and interactively, comprise the language of a particular art medium.

Creation activities focus on the production of an aesthetic product that represents the child's mood, feeling, or idea. Teachers may present the creative problem or encourage children to identify their own creative problems. Creation of an aesthetic product does not necessarily depend on previous exploration activities, but the product is likely to be more varied, imaginative, and stimulating if children have had prior exploration activities. Exploration and creation activities are complementary and often blend into one another without a clearly demarcated transition.
*Appreciation activities* focus on responding to the art products of others with discrimination and feeling. Art works appeal directly to the emotions and need not be mediated by formal knowledge, training, and skill. However, some knowledge of art styles and techniques allows children to engage in exploration and creation activities with heightened awareness and to respond to art products and performances with greater appreciation.

With the above strategies in mind, we now turn to specific art media, beginning with painting.
Painting as Creative Activity

Painting is a form of communication for children, and they rarely need to be coaxed to paint. The teacher’s role is to respond to children’s painting in ways that stimulate more complex uses of the medium, which are aesthetically pleasing. The teacher’s comments should focus on the use of the various elements of painting as well as on the feeling, mood, and idea evoked by the painting. Children can become familiar with the basic elements of painting during their exploration and creation activities. These elements are:

1. Colors: their vibrancy and intensity; their lightness, darkness, or heaviness; how they come forward or withdraw when juxtaposed; the amount of area covered by one color in comparison to another.
2. Lines: their direction, strength, clarity, circularity, straightness, angularity, tension, repetition, and speed.
3. Shapes and forms: their area or volume, movement or solidity, rigidity or fluidity, and symmetry or asymmetry.
4. Spaces: their quantity and size, how they unify or segregate other elements.
5. Subject matter: the ease of recognizing objects or figures; whether parts of the representation(s) are omitted, distorted, or exaggerated; the mood the subject evokes; the familiarity or strangeness of the subject.
All the elements in painting are continually interacting. Each element influences the impact of all the others. As each of the elements is identified and examined during exploration and creation activities, the teacher should point out these interactions, for example, how space is influenced by color and line and volume.

*Exploration Activities.* The problems presented to children during exploration activities are designed to help them discover different ways to put paint on paper. A beginning activity is to have children stand around a large table on which are large quantities of newsprint paper or classified ad pages of a newspaper. Water and rags are readily available for cleaning brushes. Only one color is used at first. The teacher then presents a series of problem statements dealing with the various elements of painting: color, line, shape, space, and subject matter. Following are some examples of problem statements.

1. Create at least five different shapes. Group the shapes close together, far apart, all in one corner.
2. Try groups of the same shape. Try different shapes within groups but in varying sizes.
3. Make one group of shapes one color and another group a different color. Next use different colors in each group.
4. Place a large area of color next to a small area of the same color or next to a large area of a different color. Outline one area in a dark color, another area in a light color.
5. Space your areas of color far apart, close together.
6. How many different types of lines can you place around the color areas: thick-thin? even-uneven? single-multiple?
7. Paint lines in several places, in several colors. Change their directions. Use them only on edges of the paper. Make them move off the paper.
8. Make an outline of something you eat. How could you change the type of outline you made? Make several outlines of the same thing. Fill the outlines in with different colors. Use lines, dots, smudges, or circles to fill in the outline.
Exploration activity problems like those above can be varied endlessly. They should be presented as rapidly as the children can try out their ideas. Wording of the problems will vary depending on the children's oral language comprehension level. Colors, size of brushes and paper, and texture and shape of paper can all be varied for further exploratory sessions.

As the children work, the teacher walks around the table observing and commenting unobtrusively about the variety of solutions ex-

A teacher helps a student explore the relationships between shape and color in this exploratory art activity.
hibited. The teacher uses descriptive and nonjudgmental remarks such as:

1. Mary is using colors on all parts of the sheet while John is keeping big spaces around his colors.
2. Toby is using a heavy outline in one place while Vera is using lots of lines in many directions.
3. Karen is using a brush with just a little paint on it while Frank is keeping the brush very wet and full.
4. Albert is still thinking about how to use the paints (comment on a child not yet involved in the activity).

As soon as children finish their problem on one piece of paper, they can discard it and start on another. The purpose of the activity is not to express an idea or emotion but to explore ways of using paint on paper. Exploration activities should be kept brief, probably no more than 20 minutes. They are not ends in themselves but rather are designed to expose children to alternative ways of using the elements of painting in their creative efforts.

If children become deeply involved in a single work during an exploration activity, they have probably crossed over into a creative work effort. This work should be respected as such and should be kept and signed. Also, it is common for young children to imitate one another's paintings during exploration activities. This is acceptable as long as children feel free to accept or reject elements of the work they are imitating. Essentially, imitation of peers is a rudimentary form of appreciation in that it represents praise for the imitated product.

Creation Activities. Before children begin to paint, it is important for them to take time to observe their surroundings. Let them articulate what they observe with regard to the elements of color, line, shape, form, space, and subject. With repeated aesthetically oriented observations, children will be able to draw on a store of inner visual images for their creative painting efforts.
Following are some examples of small objects children can look at to make them more aware of colors, shapes, patterns, and textures in the world of nature. Using a magnifying glass adds a different perspective to the observations.

1. Slabs of wood for different grain patterns and hues.
2. Leaves from different trees for vein patterns, shapes, textures, and edges.
3. Shells for shapes, swirls, colors, and textures.
4. Stems, petals, and stamens from plants cut in various ways to expose line patterns and colors.
5. Drops of water and soap bubbles on different surfaces that reflect different light sources.
6. Fruits and vegetables cut in a variety of ways to expose patterns, colors, and shapes.
7. Tree bark with different textures, patterns, and hues.
8. Windows covered with steam, frost, or rain.
9. Concrete, asphalt, and macadam walk surfaces.
10. Photography books with close-up shots.

After a few looking experiences like those above, a teacher might suggest that children select or visualize a small object and paint it very large on a large piece of paper. The looking experience is likely to elicit thoughtful and creative paintings.

Other looking experiences to precede a painting session might focus on large objects or views. Photography books (for example, those of Ansel Adams or Edward Weston) or nature books and magazines that feature good photographs (*National Geographic* is one of the best) are especially good for this purpose. Seeing through the eyes of a good photographer provides an aesthetic viewing experience that is different from seeing with one's own eyes.

When indoors, children might look at a large wall in a classroom or hall to note the shapes within shapes (for example, a door on the wall, a window on the door). In addition, they can note texture, color,
and pattern variations among shapes. Other vistas for viewing might include rooftops, playgrounds, street scenes, and billboards. Following the guided viewing of large objects or vistas, the teacher might suggest painting a large scene, requiring careful planning of space and selected use of specific art elements to be included.

Another type of experience prior to painting might be drawing attention to the human body and its movement. One such experience could be an exploratory dance session during which the teacher calls attention to how the body parts move. This kind of experience serves as stimulation for painting those body parts and their movements.

Other ways of looking might focus on different parts of the human body, such as the lips, eyes, hair, or toes. An interesting way for children to look at the parts of the body from an aesthetic perspective is cutting a square from the center of a piece of heavy paper to make a frame and looking at the body part through the frame. The framing narrows the focus and sets the limits of what they wish to paint. This technique also helps children avoid painting stereotyped representations of the human form.

Guided observations of large groups of people can serve to stimulate action or story paintings. The teacher might begin the guided observation by asking children how close together the people are, what parts of the people are most visible, what direction the people are facing, and whether the people are grouped in circles, lines, or randomly.

What impresses a student in an aesthetically guided looking experience is highly individual. Looking at another person's eyes may lead to paintings that stress colors or patterns or shapes, or none or all of these elements. The role of the teacher in guiding observations is to stimulate expression, not to determine what the particular expression will be.

While children are engaged in creative painting sessions, teachers should direct their comments to the use of the elements of painting and the feeling, mood, and idea expressed. Teachers may compare,
in a nonjudgmental manner, the techniques used by one child with those of other children. For example, a teacher might comment, “Both George and Mark painted with big masses of color close to each other; Henry used small areas of color with lots of white space between them.”

Some cautions regarding teacher comments are worth noting here. Do not ask, “What did you paint?” The question implies that the purpose of the painting is to communicate verbally a story or piece of information. The only logical answer to such a question is, “I painted a painting.” Painting communicates but not in a verbal mode. A second caution is not to ask children in advance what they intend to paint. Painting is visual thinking. Asking children to verbalize their ideas just prior to the act of painting is an interruption and an inhibitor of their visual thinking. Another caution, especially with young children, is to refrain from asking them the names of the colors they are using in the painting. Colors are important to painting with respect to how they act upon one another and on other painting elements. To quiz a child on color names during a creative painting session transforms the aesthetic experience into an academic experience. Such an intrusion is as inappropriate as interrupting an exciting conversation to ask the child how to spell a word. A final caution is to refrain from an undue emphasis on neatness, either in the process or the product. Neatness is not a requirement for aesthetically pleasing work and, if stressed inappropriately, may become a hindrance to creativity.

Creative paintings should be signed and mounted for display when completed. The care given to mounting children’s creative products communicates to children that their work is valued and is an aesthetic contribution to the classroom environment. In the same vein, teachers should surround children with aesthetically pleasing objects to develop their appreciation of the visual arts. Indeed, although art frequently copies nature, it is also true that, after viewing art, persons often are able to appreciate aspects of nature that previously escaped their attention.
Appreciation Activities. Students will learn to appreciate art if they are guided to think about what they see. Frequent viewing of good-quality prints or visits to art museums and galleries provide many opportunities for open-ended problem solving in art appreciation. The process is initiated by looking at art works and asking questions or presenting challenges such as the following:

1. Which paintings appear to be carefully planned and which appear to use loose or spontaneous ideas that occur while the artist is working?

2. Find paintings in which the shapes of the subject matter are sharply defined; paintings in which the shapes blend into one another.

3. Find a painting with lots of detail; find one that is simple and lacks detail.

4. Find a painting where a person in the painting is looking out toward the viewer; find one where the viewer is looking deeply into the spaces or areas of the painting.

5. Find a painting where line appears to be the most important element; do the same for color, mass, mood.

Game formats are a useful activity to familiarize students with different artists prior to visits to art museums or galleries. In one such game, the teacher collects several sets of postcard art reproductions. Each set includes two different paintings by the same artist (choose artists with a distinctive style). Begin with just two sets (four cards) by strikingly different artists (for example, two by Rembrandt and two by Frankenthaler). Shuffle the cards, place them randomly on the floor, and ask a student to put together the two by the same artist. Gradually add more sets with larger numbers of postcards in each set and sets that require more subtle distinctions among artists (for example, three by Rembrandt, three by Modigliani, three by Cassatt, and three by Eakins).

Similar games can be developed requiring distinctions among art media (water colors, pastels, and oils), art movements (Impressionism,
Cubism, Romanticism), or ethnic art styles (African, Far Eastern, American Indian, Egyptian). After playing these games, students will have developed some discrimination about artists, art movements, and art styles. When they visit the art museum to see original art works, they will be better prepared to deal with the problem-solving questions they are given.
Music as Creative Activity

Music expresses a mood, idea, or feeling through sound patterns extending over time. A problem-solving approach to music involves children in musical experiences as listeners and as creators and gives them an understanding and appreciation of the elements and emotional impact of music. Music derives its emotional power from the following elements:

1. Rhythm: a pattern of beats with distinctive accents.
2. Volume: the relative loudness of the sound pattern.
3. Tempo: the relative speed of the sound pattern.
4. Harmony: the blending of two or more sound patterns.
5. Pitch: the high or low tones in the sound pattern.
6. Melody: a succession of musical tones falling into a recognizable sound pattern.
7. Timbre: the quality of tone produced by the voice or by plucking, beating, rattling, or blowing an instrument.

*Exploration and Creation Activities.* A problem-solving approach to exploring the elements of music involves the creation of music as well. For example, exploring the element of timbre is experienced by creating music on an instrument, such as plucking strings on a guitar or beating on a snare drum.

Exploration and creation activities in music should be conducted with small groups of children. In this way, children can take turns
in responding to musical problems without waiting very long. Also, children will need some acoustical privacy when working individually or in small groups on their musical problems.

A beginning activity might be exploration of the element of rhythm in which children use their own names to demonstrate rhythm. Children sit in a circle with a large book or slab of wood on their laps. The teacher calls a child's name, simultaneously beating out the rhythm of the name. The children respond by imitating the teacher. After practicing beating out the rhythm of each child's name, the process is repeated without saying the name, only beating the rhythm. Then the child whose name is being transmitted rhythmically by beats stands when he or she recognizes the rhythm as his or her name. With young children, this activity can last for several sessions; older students may spend just a few minutes on it.

A variation of this activity is to pair a child with a long name with one with a short name. The two then take turns beating their names to each other in rotation or in harmony. Some acoustical privacy is needed for this activity. After practice with rhythms, the children are ready to solve some problems involving other musical elements. A few sample problems follow:

1. How may the dialogue of the two names be varied by changing the tempo of one of the names; the other name; both names?
2. How may the dialogue of the two names be varied by changing the volume of one name; the other name; both names?
3. How may the dialogue of the two names be varied by changing the combination of tempo and volume in different ways?
4. What kinds of harmonies may be created by the simultaneous beating of both names, varying the tempo and volume?
5. How may the effect be varied by using different surfaces upon which to beat? By using improvised plucking, blowing, and rattling instruments? Organize a scavenger hunt whereby each
person must find something in the classroom or at home that makes a different and/or interesting sound when struck.

After working in pairs, groups may be enlarged (no more than three with young children) and the above problems repeated. The same types of problems may be used with a single child and a group of children, or between two groups of children.

After children have become familiar with the elements of rhythm, tempo, harmony, and timbre, musical instruments are introduced. Each child is then given an instrument such as a harmonica, tonette, xylophone, autoharp, bells, or ukelele. To avoid unstructured and random exploration of the instruments, begin by immediately introducing creative music problems. The first problem might be to play their own name rhythms as a single note on the instrument. Subsequent problems might be to play the name rhythm using two notes and then increasing the number of notes.

The teacher may then return to the problems cited earlier, starting with children working with their instruments alone for a considerable time and then working in pairs. As they use the instruments, children can be encouraged to modify, expand, or abandon name rhythms in favor of more original rhythms. As the children progress through the various musical elements, the teacher's role is predominantly that of reminding children of the possibilities open to them in varying the musical elements.

The human voice is the most readily available and probably the most important musical instrument for children to explore. However, exploration of musical elements using the voice requires special attention. For example, it is better to use nonsense syllables like bah or dah rather than real words when exploring the elements of music vocally. Also, there should be no accompaniment for the vocal exercises, because it can distract the children's attention from the musical elements of pitch, volume, and timbre produced by the voice alone.

The same series of problems cited earlier may be used, with ample opportunity for each child to demonstrate a solution to the various
These children are learning about the essentials of music by beating out the rhythms of their names.

problems using his or her voice. Teachers' comments during exploratory/creative musical experiences should be nonjudgmental and focus on the possibilities of the voice in terms of the musical elements of rhythm, volume, tempo, pitch, harmony, and melody.

Appreciation Activities. The opportunity to listen frequently to high-quality music is essential for developing musical appreciation. However, listening experiences must be balanced with participation experiences in which children are making their own music.

Some aspects of music appreciation, such as history of music, lives of famous composers, and knowledge of musical forms are best taught using traditional methods of reading, discussion, and listening to recordings. Recordings can be used to teach children the tonal qualities of the various orchestra and band instruments and also for familiarizing students with different musical styles (classical, jazz, opera, folk, reggae, etc.) and with music from different cultures (African, Chinese, Spanish, Latin American, etc.).
A game format is useful for teaching basic information about instruments and musical styles. One example is using a set of cards with a different instrument depicted on each card. Each student has a set of the cards. The teacher plays a short recording featuring one of the instruments and asks the students to hold up the appropriate card to match the instrument that they hear playing. The same format can be used for identifying musical styles. Another musical awareness activity is to have students find music from a historical period or from a particular culture to use as background listening in a social studies class.

Children can learn to appreciate music with their bodies as well as with their ears. Moving to music provides an outlet for many varieties of creative expression. This requires ample space in order to accommodate the full range of children's expressive movement, and the music should be selected with great care. The selections should not be loud, electronically magnified rock music, which tends to evoke stereotypic movement. Initially the music selections should be ones with clear and pronounced rhythms with rich orchestrations (for example, Brahms's "Fourth Symphony" or Copeland's "Billy the Kid"). Later, as children have more experience with expressive movement, more subtle mood pieces can be used (for example, Debussy's "Clouds" or Wagner's "Forest Murmurs").
Dance and Movement as Creative Expression

Dance expresses a mood, idea, or feeling through body movements. Through dance children develop a kinesthetic understanding of the range of body movements used to communicate aesthetic ideas. Dance has a number of elements that overlap but may be explored and appreciated separately. They include:

A. The body in motion
   1. How body parts move separately and in relation to one another.
   2. Body movements such as walking, running, turning, rising, sinking, twisting, swaying, swinging, and trembling.
   3. Body flow such as smooth and flowing movements, successive and discrete movements, and short and jerky movements.

B. Use of space
   1. The size of the space as it relates to how many moving bodies share it.
   2. The size of the movements by individuals and groups.
   3. Use of space on different planes (high, middle, low) and the direction of movement in the space.

C. Nature of movement
   1. Strong or delicate.
2. Direct or indirect.
3. Tense or relaxed.

D. Movement relationships
1. Parts of body in relation to each other.
2. Individuals in relation to each other.
3. Groups in relation to each other.
4. Movements in relation to each other.
5. Combinations of the above relationships.

E. Time factors in movement
1. Rhythms, patterns, accents.
2. Tempi and pauses.

To begin an open-ended, problem-solving approach to dance, the teacher should:

1. Arrange the room so it is free of physical barriers.
2. Expedite the children's movement to their places by using tape or chalk to indicate on the floor where the children are to stand.
3. Space the children far enough apart so that they can rotate in place with arms extended without touching each other.
4. Explain and practice the start and stop signals for the movement activities.
5. Avoid demonstrating gestures and movements but encourage children to watch one another to see the variety of expressive movements that are possible.
6. Make sure the children wear comfortable and nonrestricting clothes. If possible, let the children be barefoot. Girls and boys should wear tights or pants.
7. Do not pressure a child who is reluctant to try a movement problem. Let the child determine whether he or she feels secure enough to perform the movement.
8. Watch for signs of fatigue and provide for rest periods.
9. Have available such accessory materials as balls, scarves, hoops, ropes, and large cardboard cartons.
**Exploration Activities.** The purpose of dance exploration activities is to experiment with and test the range of the body's movement capacity. Through exploration, children gain confidence in the control of their bodies. The exploratory problems the teacher presents should be brief and elicit quick but varied responses. For example, the problem may be to get from point A to point B slowly and in a low position. Stating the problem this way allows for variety in response, such as crawling, sliding, wriggling, moving backwards or sideways.

Avoid stating the problem as a metaphor or simile (“Bend and sway your body like a tree”). Keep the focus on the body movement itself (“Bend and sway your body low down in several directions”). In this way stereotypical movements are minimized, and children will feel free to experiment with a variety of movements. However, the teacher might use examples to suggest a more generalized movement idea. Using the bending problem again, the teacher may say, “Think of how grass bends, how trees bend, and how kites dip up and down in the wind. Now make a part of your body bend in a large, round movement that goes down to the ground, first in one direction and then in another.”

During initial movement exploration activities, avoid the use of drum and other rhythmic beats or recorded music to accompany the exercise. Children respond more easily using their own natural cadences and timing. Following an external rhythmic beat or musical selection tends to distract the children from concentrating on the movement problem.

In preparing exploration activities, the teacher should develop a set of problems that focuses on each of the dance elements and gradually increase their complexity. Repeated presentation of the same problem allows for exploration of a variety of solutions. Teachers can stimulate variety by making descriptive and nonjudgmental comments, such as, “Joan is moving her hands and feet fast in small movements while Valerie is moving her legs gently in big, round movements.” Children often imitate one another during these exploration activi-
ties; and if one child exhibits enthusiasm and variety, the whole group is likely to remain with that problem for a longer period.

Following are some examples of initial exploratory dance sessions. The wording can be adapted to the developmental level of the children.

1. Stand in a circle. Walk slowly around using only one part of your feet: the front or back or inside or outside. Using only one part of your feet, walk lightly, heavily, springingly, tensely, and loosely. Keep changing the part of your feet being used.

2. Sit at your own space in your bare feet. Move your toes in different ways and bend your feet in different directions. With your feet turned in toward each other, make them talk to each other as in a quiet conversation, as in an animated conversation, as in an argument. Make one foot behave differently than the other. (The same exercise can be done using hands, stressing movement of fingers and wrists.)

3. Lie down at your place. In how many different directions can you point your knees? What shapes can you make using your legs and feet? Still lying down, move one leg with the toes leading until you find a partner's toes and touch lightly. Repeat the series of exercises using your hands.

4. Lying next to your partner, bring your legs up as high as you can. Intertwine your legs with those of your partner and make them sway. What kinds of shapes can you create with your leg and your partner's leg?

5. Standing at your space, wiggle your hips in different directions. Move slowly toward your partner and touch hips lightly, gently pushing each other by using only your hips, then move toward the wall. Stop when you touch the wall.

6. Touch your partner with your arm or leg while moving another part of your body as far from your partner as it can go. Maintaining contact with your partner, sink and rise alternately, changing the speed of your movement and changing the body part touching.

7. Everyone move toward the center of the room, huddling as close as you can get. Staying close, everyone stretch as high as you can
get; sink as low as you can get. Face outward from the huddle, swaying your head. Still facing outward, twist your body toward the inside of the huddle. Return to your space.

8. Squat down as low as you can and make a shape with your hands touching two parts of your body. Change the shape into one that is wide and tense; crooked and small; twisted and long.

9. In a squatting position, stretch one body part as if it were trying to escape from the rest of your body. Bring that part back and stretch another part away; then stretch two parts.

10. Balancing on any one part of your body, let your body rock back and forth on that part. Roll your body slowly until you touch someone else gently, then roll back to your place. Do it again in a different direction.

11. Lying down in your place, let one part of your body hump up and then flatten out again. Then let another part do the same.

12. Raise one part of your body and let it sway in the air. Now slowly sink down. Try it with another part and then another.

13. Stand in a circle facing out. With your elbow leading, move toward the wall. Staying close to the floor and moving in a jerky manner, slide up the wall as high as you can. Make a stiff and crooked shape against the wall, then a round shape.

14. Move to the space of your partner. Touch hands and sway together in different directions. Partner A make a low bridge with your body. Partner B move over, under, and around the bridge. A and B change roles.

15. (Teacher divides the class into groups of three to five children and designates them as A, B, C, etc.) Student A make a shape with your body. Student B link onto A; Student C link onto A and B; etc.

16. (Teacher hands out a three- to four-foot length of rope to each child.) At your own space, hold the rope high in the air and let it drop. Look at the shape the rope makes when it falls on the floor. Make the same shape with your body. (Repeat as often as interest is sustained.)
17. Hold the rope stretched straight between your hands. Move the rope from high to low position, then in circles, next backward and forward, and finally in all directions.

18. Facing your partner, take one end of two ropes in each hand and give the other ends to your partner. With both ropes stretched tightly, keep them moving all the time while you stand in place. Keep the ropes taut. Student A sink down, and B slowly move around A. Now B sink down and A move around. Return to your spaces and drop your rope. Pick up one end of the rope and drag it slowly up along your legs and body, trying to keep the whole length of the rope touching you all the time. Keep the rope moving slowly.

19. (Teacher hands out large balls, about six to ten inches in diameter.) At your own space, hold the ball without letting your hands touch it. Change your body position however you like; keep moving the ball without touching it with your hands.

20. Wrap yourself around the ball so that you are hiding the ball with your body. Open up and move the ball as far away from your body as you can. Move the ball in a circle around your space.

21. (Teacher hands out large cardboard boxes.) Step into your box and sink slowly into it, hiding there. Let one part of your body slowly move out; quickly pull it back in. Let another part escape, and gradually pull your body out behind it.

22. Turn the box over on top of you. Move slowly with the box over you. If you bump something, slowly change direction and keep moving. Let one part of your body stick out as you move; change that part.

23. Return to your space and stand beside your box. Put one part of your body inside the box, and pull the rest of your body into the box slowly after that part. With that part leading again, slowly pull yourself out of the box.

24. Sit next to your box and turn the box over on yourself. Make the box shake and shiver, bump and thump, and rock and turn around.

25. (Teacher hands out scarves or light pieces of fabric.) Crumple the fabric in your hands so that it is a tight ball. Slowly open your
hands and watch as the fabric falls out and loosens. Squeeze yourself into a tight ball as if you were in someone's fist. Now the fist has opened and you slowly relax and loosen up. (Repeat as needed.)

26. Form a circle, holding the fabric over your face by one corner. Move quickly around in a circle, fast enough so that the fabric clings to your face without your holding it.

27. With your partner, cooperate to create movements using the fabric jointly.

These examples of exploration activities dealing with the elements of dance can be modified and expanded in infinite ways.

Creation Activities. After considerable exploration activities with dance elements, children should be ready for creative dance experiences. However, exploration activities will continue to be used as a warm-up for creative dance. In fact, many ideas for creative dance will emerge during the solution of exploratory problems.

The open-ended, problem-solving approach to creative dance advocated here is done without music. When dancing to music, the musical mood and rhythms take over and control the movements. Creativity in dance, without the controlling element of music, requires children to think in terms of movement alone, movement they have experimented with during their earlier dance exploration activities.

Dance creation is simply the choreographing of brief movement sequences of three or more parts. For example, the dance might have a beginning shape, a middle movement, and an ending shape. Planning and executing the choreography can be a group experience. The teacher might introduce the problem as follows:

“You are to make up a short dance that has a beginning shape, a middle movement, and an ending shape. What shall the beginning shape be?”

After eliciting some alternative shapes from the children, the teacher writes down or draws a diagram of the idea finally selected. If ideas are slow to come, the teacher might ask, “Will you start with a floor shape or a wall shape? A high or low shape? An open or closed shape?”
Children explore the idea of movement in several planes as they work together in a creative dance activity.

Everyone demonstrates the beginning shape selected (allow for variation in the demonstration).

"Now what kind of movement will follow the beginning shape?" The movement selected from the alternatives is discussed and recorded by the teacher. If ideas are slow to come, the teacher might ask, "Will you move in a high or low direction? Fast or slow? What part of the body shall lead the movement? Will you move in a straight or indirect direction? Will you maintain the same idea throughout the movement or gradually change from high to low or from straight to indirect?" Everyone practices going into the movement from the beginning shape selected earlier. Finally the teacher asks, "With what kind of shape will you finish the dance passage?" The completed dance sequence is then practiced by all. Written records of dance sequences are kept for future reference.

Group dances are repeated several times until the sequences are thoroughly familiar. Rhythm instruments or props may be gradually
introduced. Further choreographic experiences might involve students working in pairs, individually, or in contrasting groups.

Once individuals or small groups begin to choreograph their own material, they should have an opportunity to perform at least once in front of the class at the end of a dance session. Since each dance will take less than a minute, there should be little time lost waiting for one's turn. During performances two corners of the room can be assigned for the audience, while the dancers perform diagonally across the room to and from the other two corners.

The teacher's role during a creative dance activity is to remind children of the options they have from the list of dance elements covered in exploration activities. Also, the teacher might introduce a new prop (rope, scarves, hoops, etc.), improvise costumes, or create a mood by manipulating room lighting. Inviting parents or guests from another class to be part of the audience adds to the excitement of the performance.

Appreciation Activities. Above all, dance appreciation requires exposure to good dance performances. This might involve live performances at student recitals or professional performances by touring dance companies. Also, videotape cassettes are now available that show a variety of dance forms (ballet, modern, folk) as well as ethnic dance styles (African, Native American, Russian, Greek, etc.). These experiences should be discussed in terms of the dance elements observed and possibly imitated in later creative dance lessons.
Drama as Creative Expression

Drama is a story in action. It contains suspense, conflict, and eventually resolution. It is a form of artistic expression that allows audiences to see, hear, and understand more than if they were watching reality. Good drama allows the audience to empathize with the play's characters — but from a distance. This distance is the dramatic illusion that gives drama its aesthetic appeal.

Exploratory and creative experiences are designed to help young children understand the illusory nature of drama, to distinguish between fact and fiction, and to develop aesthetic responses to drama. Exploration activities include the elements of acting: the use of body, gesture, and voice for communicating moods, ideas, and feelings. Other drama elements, such as staging, costumes, props, music, and lighting are added when the children feel the need for them. Creative activities revolve around the element of action associated with conflict situations. Alternating exploratory and creative activities exposes children to all the elements of drama.

*Exploration Activities.* The body and voice are key elements in drama. The following problems start with exploring facial movements and expressions, then other body movements are added, and finally come vocal inflections and vocal emotions. Exploration problems start with the self and gradually move on to interaction in pairs and then groups. Once these problems are addressed, exploration spills over into creation.
The teacher and children sit on the floor in a circle so they all can see one another. The teacher presents the problems in rapid order and makes descriptive, nonjudgmental comments as the children respond. For problems dealing with facial movements and expressions, the teacher can use either of two questions: "How will you look when you . . ." or "How can you show that you . . .":

1. are eating hot soup or a hot potato?
2. are sucking a lemon?
3. are drinking milk through a straw?
4. are taking medicine that tastes awful?
5. are trying to get someone to look at you by using your face only?
6. when a dentist is fixing your teeth?
7. are trying to be serious when things are really funny?
8. won first prize in a contest you did not expect to win?
9. your pet is badly injured and will probably die?
10. your parents think you broke an expensive vase, and you did not?

11. are nauseous and think you might be sick?

For problems using the upper body and arms, the teacher might ask, "Show me how you would look when . . .":

1. opening a jar that is stuck.
2. passing a glass of water full to the brim to another.
3. passing a heavy marble slab to another.
4. peeling and eating a banana.
5. brushing your teeth.
6. shaping a lump of wet clay on a potter's wheel.
7. juggling oranges, then juggling balloons.
8. holding a porcupine, a rabbit, a hamster, a snake, or a bird.

For problems using the whole body, the teacher might ask, "Show me how you would look if you are . . .":

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1. stuffed into a small iron box with a tight lid and are trying to get out.
2. putting on shoes that are too tight.
3. climbing a tree.
4. taking a bath, a shower.
5. walking with a pebble in your shoe.

Paired whole body problems might include the following:

1. Engage in a tug of war with an imaginary rope.
2. Play a game of catch, tennis, and ping pong.
3. Together, carry something heavy and put it down.
4. Fold large sheets and towels together.

Group whole body problems while moving around the room in a circle might include the following:

1. Walk in the mud, on ice, through piles of leaves, or on hot sand.
2. Balance on rolling logs.
3. Walk on a tightrope.
4. Carry and protect a baby while walking in a storm.
5. Walk in a strong windy rainstorm carrying an umbrella.
7. Float in outer space.
8. Back away from something that frightens you.
9. Explore a dark and dangerous cave.

For voice inflection, ask children to say, "Where are you going?" emphasizing the first word, then the second, then the third, etc. Follow with other sentences, noting the difference in meaning when different words are stressed. Then use the same sentences to speak in a whisper, a shout, an anguished cry, a laugh, or a sneer. Another activity in which children can learn to use their voices to communicate different moods or feelings is to have them, one at a time, stand behind a screen and count aloud from one to five in a way that ex-
presses an emotion. Let the rest of the group guess what emotion is being expressed. For young children, begin with happy and sad. Then gradually add anger, fear, surprise, and disgust. After that, children may add other, more subtle emotions.

Creation Activities. Creative drama is initiated with a crisis or conflict situation presented by the teacher. The excitement associated with the crisis or conflict generates the dramatic tension and allows children to portray emotions for creative purposes. The teacher explains the conflict situation, and the children then resolve it however they wish. Once given the basic conflict situation, children are free to work out the plot development. The teacher may give initial role assignments, but children must be allowed to change roles, invent additional roles, and trade off roles.

In order for the entire class to participate in the drama, the teacher must present a situation that involves many characters. At first, some children may do little more than stand around and observe others who are working on a particularly exciting part of the action. As the plot

These children are learning to express such emotions as fear and anger in a drama exploration activity.
develops and action sequences crystallize, more and more children perform their roles spontaneously rather than watch others perform. Children sometimes need three or more sessions to lose their self-consciousness and participate fully.

Children gradually begin to stage the drama; they designate places where events are to occur; they become more aware of positions and movements; they refine their characterizations; their dialogue becomes more elaborate and their actions more detailed.

The conflict situations the teacher presents will vary depending on the age and sophistication of the children. Following are some sample situations:

1. People are shopping in a supermarket. Two thieves enter. The thieves go over to the check-out counters. They tell the shoppers and cashiers to stand where they are. They demand money from the cashiers.

2. A department store is crowded with shoppers. Some children wander away from their parents and meet by the elevator. The elevator door opens. They rush in and push all the buttons. The elevator doors close, but the elevator won't move; it's stuck.

3. One night, some mysterious force changes all the children in a town into insects. When morning comes, the children and their parents discover what has happened.

4. One day as the children board the school bus, the driver welcomes them aboard. When the door closes, the bus flies into the air.

5. While out on a school picnic, a large group of children become lost. They wander over a hill and into a town where kangaroos rule the land and people are kept in pens to be fattened up for food consumption.

After the drama has progressed to the point where the children have developed a reasonable plot line and have practiced playing different roles, the teacher can suggest the possibility of performing the drama for parents or another class. Delaying the announcement of performing for an audience removes anxieties and pressures associated
with performance, which can interfere with the open and free problem-solving process of creative drama. However, the performance serves as a nice culminating activity and eases the transition into preparing another.

Appreciation Activities. Attending live children's theater presented by a community group and selective viewing of quality television drama are two ways of developing children's appreciation of drama. Follow-up discussions of how the various drama elements were used reinforces the exploratory and creative experiences the children have had in the classroom and makes them more discriminating.
Conclusion

The open-ended, problem-solving approach and suggested activities for developing creative thinking through the arts presented in this fastback can be adapted for other curriculum areas, such as sculpture and literature. With only minor modifications, the approach can be used with all age groups, all ability groups, and with students with all types of handicapping conditions. With this approach children and teachers alike will find enjoyment in creative thinking experiences in which they participate, and their appreciation of the fine and performing arts will endure.
Suggested Readings


233. What Educators Should Know About Copyright
234. Teenage Suicide: What Can the Schools Do?
235. Legal Basics for Teachers
236. A Model for Teaching Thinking Skills: The Imagination Process
237. The Induction of New Teachers
238. The Case for Basic Skills Programs in Higher Education
239. Recruiting Superior Teachers: The Interview Process
240. Teaching and Teacher Education: Implementing Reform
241. Learning Through Laughter: Humor in the Classroom
242. High School Dropouts: Causes, Consequences and Cure
243. Community Education: Processes and Programs
244. Teaching the Process of Thinking, K-12
245. Dealing with Abnormal Behavior in the Classroom
246. Teaching Science as Inquiry
247. Mentor Teachers: The California Model
248. Using Microcomputers in School Administration
249. Missing and Abducted Children: The School's Role in Prevention
250. A Model for Effective School Discipline
251. Teaching Reading in the Secondary School
252. Educational Reform: The Forgotten Half
253. Voluntary Religious Activities in Public Schools: Policy Guidelines
254. Teaching Writing with the Microcomputer
255. How Should Teachers Be Educated? An Assessment of Three Reform Reports
256. A Model for Teaching Writing: Process and Product
257. Preschool Programs for Handicapped Children
258. Serving Adolescents' Reading Interests Through Young Adult Literature
259. The Year-Round School: Where Learning Never Stops
260. Using Educational Research in the Classroom
261. Microcomputers and the Classroom Teacher
262. Writing for Professional Publication
263. Adopt a School—Adopt a Business
264. Teenager Parenthood: The School's Response
265. AIDS Education: Curriculum and Health Policy
266. Dialogue Journals: Writing as Conversation
267. Preparing Teachers for Urban Schools
268. Education: By Invitation Only
269. Mission Possible: Innovations in the Bronx Schools

270. A Primer on Music for Non-Music Educators
271. Extraordinary Educators: Lessons in Leadership
272. Reform and the Schools: Significant Court Decisions in the 1980s
273. The High-Performing Educational Manager
274. Student Press and the Hazelwood Decision
275. Improving the Textbook Selection Process
276. Effective Schools Research: Practice and Promise
277. Improving Teaching Through Coaching
278. How Children Learn a Second Language
279. Eliminating Procrastination Without Putting It Off
280. Early Childhood Education: What Research Tells Us
281. Personalizing Staff Development: The Career Lattice Model
282. The Elementary School Publishing Center
283. The Case for Public Schools of Choice
284. Concurrent Enrollment Programs: College Credit for High School Students
285. Educators' Consumer Guide to Private Tutoring Services
286. Peer Supervision: A Way of Professionalizing Teaching
287. Differentiated Career Opportunities for Teachers
288. Controversial Issues in Schools: Dealing with the Inevitable
289. Interactive Television: Progress and Potential
290. Recruiting Minorities into Teaching
291. Preparing Students for Taking Tests
292. Creating a Learning Climate for the Early Childhood Years
293. Career Beginnings: Helping Disadvantaged Youth Achieve Their Potential
294. Interactive Videodisc and the Teaching-Learning Process
295. Using Microcomputers with Gifted Students
296. Using Microcomputers for Teaching Reading
297. Using Microcomputers for Teaching Science
298. Student Privacy in the Classroom
299. Cooperative Learning
300. The Case for School-Based Health Clinics
301. Whole Brain Education
302. Public Schools as Public Forums: Use of Schools by Non-School Publics
303. Developing Children's Creative Thinking Through the Arts
304. Meeting the Needs of Transient Students
305. Student Obesity: What Can the Schools Do?

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