

# THE USE OF CREATIVE DRAMA WITH ACTING-OUT SIXTH AND SEVENTH GRADE BOYS AND GIRLS

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## Abstract

This paper describes the development and use of creative drama with 30 children over a six month period. The children were seen weekly for half hour sessions in groups of 7 or 8. They were asked to create a short drama or play which was then video-taped and immediately played back for discussion. Over time, the dramas evolved through four stages: chaos; control and chaos; control; and flexibility. Certain developmental and psychological themes also emerged. These were: narcissism and exhibitionism, activity, orality, dominance, morality, social themes, comedy and rhythm. These findings are discussed both from Freudian and Piagetian frameworks and several implications are raised.

## Résumé

Cet article décrit le développement et l'emploi du théâtre créateur chez trente enfants pendant une période de six mois. Les enfants participaient chaque semaine en groupes de sept ou huit pour une période de temps de trente minutes. On leur demandait de créer une saynète qui était enregistrée sur bande magnétoscopique et ensuite rejouée pour fins de discussion. Avec le temps, les saynètes ont évolué à travers quatre étapes: la confusion, le contrôle et la flexibilité. Certains thèmes ayant trait à la psychologie et au développement sont apparus: le narcissisme et l'exhibitionisme, l'activité, l'oralité, la dominance, la moralité, les thèmes sociaux, la comédie et le rythme. On discute ces découvertes selon les lignes de pensée de Freud et de Piaget. Enfin, on soulève plusieurs questions.

A common problem facing an elementary school counsellor is an overwhelming caseload. Incidences of referrals often increase dramatically in the sixth and seventh grades. Tanner (1970) has suggested that this, in part, may be due to the onset of puberty. Puberty brings tremendous physical and emotional changes in the body. Some of these changes may be manifested behaviorally in terms of hyperactivity in the classroom, withdrawal, impulsiveness, destructiveness and primitive exhibitionism.

### PROBLEM

The problem the writer was faced with, both as a school counsellor and as a counsellor trainer, was to devise a method whereby a counsellor could begin to work effectively with these large numbers of referrals.

Dinkmeyer and Muro (1970) have suggested that a useful approach in treating children of this age group is some form of activity group therapy. In activity group therapy, children are able, within certain limits,

to do and say what they want. Often after such a period of free expression it is easier for the children to establish their own controls over their behavior.

While this approach has been successful in residential settings and mental health clinics, it is not readily transferable to a "normal" elementary school setting because of the lack of appropriate facilities and because of the disruptive effects it could have on the discipline of the school as a whole.

The problem then was that the treatment method — activity group therapy — had some merit but its traditional form of practice was not appropriate to the school setting.

### METHOD

Faced with this dilemma, the writer decided to explore the use of a form of treatment that he has termed "Creative Drama". This method has some aspects of both activity group therapy and developmental drama as used by Spolin (1963), Way

(1967) and Layman (1976). The rationale behind this approach stemmed from his observation that a central characteristic of the children referred for counselling was their high need to be noticed. That is, an inevitable consequence of their behaviour was that they stood out in the classroom and that everybody was forced to pay attention to them. It was decided then to legitimize this need by giving the children a clearly defined space and time where they could literally have the "full stage".

The children were taken out of the classroom for ½ hour a week and brought together in 4 groups of 7 to 8 students. Here they were encouraged to: "develop or create a short drama (5 minutes) or play", which would then be filmed on video-tape and shown back immediately afterwards. The idea was for them to develop their own plays. The plays could be from their imagination, from TV or films or from any combination of the above.

The writer defined his role and those of three graduate student assistants as facilitators whose purpose was to help the children: (1) discuss the plays they wanted to do; (2) select one; (3) assign roles; (4) carry out a short rehearsal; (5) do the play for video-taping and then (6) watch the tape and discuss what they saw. In the discussion phase, we focused on three questions: (a) "What did you like about today's drama?" (b) "What did you not like?" and (c) "What would make it better next time?"

Our goal was to let the children take most of the initiative for choosing a theme and for the preparation and execution of the final drama. We were there to clarify what they were doing and to help them focus in order to accomplish the task. In this sense, we tended to alternate between being non-directive and directive, depending on how their interactions with each other were progressing. If the drama was getting too elaborate or bogged down, the facilitator would clarify the issues, make some suggestions, and then "back off" to let the children take over again. A facilitator was attached to each of the 4 groups.

The setting of limits was discussed by the children and two general rules emerged:

1. No one must get physically hurt.
2. Everyone should try to listen when someone talks.

## SUBJECTS

Thirty children were involved from one suburban elementary school in the lower Mainland around Vancouver. Referrals were made by the teachers on the basis of a concern about and/or disruptive

classroom behavior. There were 17 boys and 13 girls in the sample. Of these, four would be described as withdrawn. The two sixth grade groups were mixed boys and girls while the two seventh grade groups were homogeneous until the last month of drama. Group composition was decided by the children. Each group met for an average of 15 sessions.

## RESULTS

Over time, changes were observed in group processes and in dramatic themes. Though there was some overlap between these processes and themes for purposes of presentation, they will be reviewed separately.

### A. Developmental stages

As the dramas progressed, the groups tended to move through certain stages. These were: (a) chaos; (2) control and chaos; (3) control and (4) flexibility. For the first month (chaos phase) the students could not work together; they could not listen to each other; they could not come to any agreement over which play they would do or which part they would take. When they did finally put a play on, they forgot their words; they did not stick to the roles and the play would often disintegrate into a mad chase — a free-for-all fight or just narcissistic posturing.

After 3 to 4 sessions, however, more elaborate plots did develop and were maintained during the performance for 2 to 3 minutes before the play became a chaotic brawl. This phase (control and chaos) lasted for 2 to 3 months. Here the students would maintain a good quality dialogue and effective interaction until near the end of the play. The third stage (3rd to 5th month) was that of total control: the students now stuck to their parts, executed them with precision in a tight performance with no disintegration (i.e. no uncontrolled fighting). The fourth stage (5th to 6th month) demonstrated flexibility. Here, there was effective working together with considerable creativity, spontaneity (ad-libbing) and humor in the plots.

### B. Specific psychological themes.

Throughout the six months a record was kept of each play and the central theme recorded. At the end of the year we found these could be grouped under eight headings. Each category will now be described, the frequency with which a drama appeared will be given in parenthesis and a brief description of the nature of the play mentioned. Finally, the frequencies will be summarized in table form.

1. *Narcissism and exhibitionism.* In the beginning, the students could not work together. All they could do was draw attention to themselves in gross and primitive ways. They were fascinated by the video-camera and during the initial discussions, the girls would constantly turn around, wave at the camera, comb their hair in front of it, and literally put on a song-and-dance act. The boys were equally fascinated but more blatantly exhibitionistic than the girls. They would stand in front of the camera and yell a very prolonged: "In-tro-ducing ..." but would never have anything to introduce.

Two themes did develop out of this exhibitionism: "Dirty Jokes" (done 4 times) and "Flashing" (done 3 times). Initially the jokes were told by individuals, rather rapidly, into the camera. Eventually, their jokes and dirty stories became more formalized with the group sitting down in a row of chairs. The first person would say a few words, then stop and the second would add more and so on down the line until the joke, song or story was over. During the jokes they would often swear and call each other "gay".

In regards to incidences of "flashing", the boys took great delight in pretending to exhibit themselves in front of the camera. They would turn their rear-ends to the camera, pat their buttocks, expose the insides of their mouths and repeatedly give the "finger" gesture.

As the dramas progressed the exhibitionism and narcissism became sublimated and expressed in healthier ways. The flashing, crude language and giggling at the camera disappeared. We suggested that for each drama a group member should formally introduce the title of the play and roles to be taken by each member to the camera. At first, the quality of their introductions was very poor. The presenter could scarcely look at the camera and his work discharge would often be inaudible and too rapid. However, over time, face and eye contact to the camera improved as did the verbal presentation of the plot. Towards the end of the drama, more sophisticated forms of introductions evolved. For example, each actor would now be filmed during the introduction for a few seconds in an "action pose" that characterized his role in the play.

2. *Activity themes.* Also during the first two months a lot of time was spent in just running around. An attempt would be made to develop a

theme; they would do it for the camera but it would end up in a mad chase. Out of this, the older 7th grade boys devised two games: "Roller Derby" (done 5 times) and "Knee Hockey" (played 3 times). Roller Derby consisted of arranging gym mats in an oval shape, picking two teams who then ran around the track, tagging, bumping and trying to force each other off the mats. "Knee Hockey" was hockey played on the knees, without sticks and with a ball that was thrown as hard as possible towards the goalies.

Both games were played by the older boys only and resulted in many arguments (as they continually violated their own rules) and in the "burning off" of vast amounts of energy. The end effect was one of total exhaustion, with the boys all piled on top of each other on the floor.

These two themes, narcissism and physical activity, seemed to extinguish themselves over a period of two months and lead into themes of oral aggression and dominance.

3. *Oral aggressive themes.* There were two distinct types of drama here. The sixth graders devised plays that centred around "monsters" such as Dracula, Vampire, Sasquatch and "Jaws" (7 times) while the seventh graders did plays that occurred in "bars" (8 times). The monster themes usually involved people out walking in a wood, or swimming in the sea, who got attacked, bitten or eaten by the monster. Friends would come to the rescue with the aid of crosses or stakes. The police were called in and, after a fight, the monster would be killed.

The bar scenes consisted of buying drinks, getting drunk, then acting and walking around drunk, refusing to pay for drinks, trying to pick up girls and getting into fights with the bartenders or other customers. The police would arrive, another fight would develop and the "drunks" would be taken off to jail.

Towards the end of this phase, the themes became more original and showed elements of combining the two types of plays. For example, four men would get very drunk in a bar, another man would come in and would be asked to join the party. This man turns out to be Dracula who slowly disposes of them one-by-one when they visit the washroom.

4. *Dominance themes.* We became aware that themes of dominance were clearly the favorite with the children. At first, there were no plots, just everyone vying for the "tough guy" role,

but over time, three distinct plays emerged. Two of these were adapted from popular TV programs ("Happy Days" (7 times) and "Bionic Man" (3 times)) and one play they devised themselves ("Super-Chap" (twice)). The execution of these plays was usually well controlled.

Though the plots varied the themes were the same: "Might is right". In their plays, the main character to emerge was the "Fonze" from "Happy Days". The "Fonze" was the undisputed leader of the teenage gang. He snapped his fingers and the gang jumped to attention or fell in line, with the pecking order clearly delineated. They did whatever he asked even though they had no wish to. When the "Fonze" played tricks on them, they would not challenge him but would submit weakly. They tried to identify with him by imitating his body mannerisms, his sayings and his clothes.

As the plays progressed, the "Fonze" became kinder and assumed the roles of mediator and problem solver for intra-gang fights.

5. *Moral themes.* These themes all involved a highly organized plot (often taken from TV serials) that dealt with the struggle between "right" and "wrong". The emphasis was: "Morality is right". Aggression was expressed but occurred at the end of the play and took second place to the plot. The plots were usually the same and involved plans to rob a bank, the carrying out of a robbery, the giving of the alarm, the police moving in, the chase and the police capturing the robbers. The specific themes were: bank robberies (7); mugging (5); gang wars (3); S.W.A.T. (3).

In these plays the power and hence the roles were equally distributed across 7 or 8 players. Each had an important and crucial part to play. A lot more emphasis was given here on the group effort (everyone working together) and precision. The timing had to be perfect and retakes were made if things went wrong.

6. *Social themes.* These themes were all done by the older 7th grade girls and were: Family fights (3 times); running away from home (3 times); shoplifting (twice); teacher-student conflicts (twice); vandalism (twice) and "Bully Girl" (1 time). The themes concerned feelings of emerging independence and conflict with authority figures. The issue frequently was: "You want us to do things your way but we want to do them our way." Often a fight would break out involving yelling, pretence slapping and running

away. Sometimes the expressions of anger occurred through vandalism and shoplifting. The outcome of these dramas was often one of rejection. The girls were rejected by the authority figures for their behavior.

The moral and social themes seemed to give way in the last six weeks to two other themes: Comedy and Dance.

7. *Comedy.* The dramas became more spontaneous and humorous until eventually the main theme was that of comedy (7 times). For example, with the 6th grade boys one drama involved a group of pirates rowing to Treasure Island who get into a fight as to how to share the treasure. The boat tips over and they all end up in the water. Then, one of them notices "Jaws" swimming slowly towards them. They panic until someone decides to give "Jaws" his flask of wine. This calms "Jaws" a little but not enough; the others reluctantly give "Jaws" their wine, which makes him very drunk. This enables them to capture "Jaws", to take him back to Vancouver where they put him on display and charge admission.

Other dramas involved ethnic grocery store jokes, psychiatrist jokes, classroom jokes and role-reversal situations. These plays were fluid and yet sophisticated, some of them having humorous "commercial" breaks at points of high drama (i.e., when someone was about to be knocked out).

In the last month, the 7th grade boys and girls began to put on plays together. One of these, they worked on for two sessions and involved a role-reversal situation. The plot was as follows: Two young men are walking home drunk from the beer parlor and are assaulted and beaten up by a gang of girls. They crawl home and are about to call the police when they get a threatening, anonymous telephone call (from the girls) saying: "You will be murdered at midnight". They call the local RCMP who come over, find the story highly unbelievable and take the two men to a psychiatrist's office where they are administered the word association test.

There were a number of interesting features about this drama: (a) it represented the first time the boys and girls worked together as a large group (6 boys and 8 girls); (b) the boys allowed themselves to assume a passive role in relation to the girls, while the girls took a very aggressive role to the boys; (c) the police were no longer cast in brutal aggressive roles but

were seen as friendly, humorous yet concerned people.

8. *Rhythmical themes.* The last themes were scenes where the children imitated rock and roll concerts (twice) and a song and dance routine (once). For the sixth graders, there was some mixing of the boys and girls though the girls tended to do the singing "on stage" while the boys formed part of the audience. The 7th graders developed a far more elaborate "song and dance" number. A song "Saturday Night", was taken from the popular rock group, "Bay City Rollers", and put to a dance routine. Both

boys and girls formed the chorus line and another group of boys and girls made up the rhythm section — improvising by clapping their hands and by stamping their feet in time. It was interesting for us to observe that the group asked a previously very shy and overweight girl to do the formal introduction of this scene. She did it very well and then rejoined the group as part of the rhythm section.

This was their last drama session and the children left feeling happy about what they had done, sad that it was over, and asking whether they could come again next year.

Table I below summarizes the themes, their approximate duration and frequency.

TABLE I  
SUMMARY OF DURATION AND FREQUENCY OF DRAMA THEMES

THEME	DURATION	FREQUENCY
1. Narcissism & Exhibitionism	1st month	7
2. Activity Stage	1st - 2nd month	8
3. Oral-aggressive	1st - 3rd month	15
4. Dominance	2nd - 4th month	12
5. Moral	2nd - 5th month	18
6. Social	3rd - 6th month	13
7. Comedy	5th - 6th month	7
8. Rhythm	6th month	3

EVALUATION

In order to assess the impact of the creative drama on the children we waited for two months before administering an evaluation form to them. The rationale for this was as follows: if drama was effective in bringing about any deeper changes, these would still be remembered two months later. If the changes were superficial, not much credibility would be given to the sessions.

An evaluation form was designed to tap the children's thoughts and feelings about drama by asking them specific "yes" or "no" questions. The form was administered to 26 students (four having moved from the school subsequent to the termination of drama) and results are presented below.

Individual "Yes" or "No" Items

100% enjoyed the drama (26)

- 100% felt the dramas improved as the year progressed (26)
- 88% would have liked more discussion after the drama (23)
- 85% would like to come to drama again next year (22)
- 85% thought drama helped them get along better in school (22)
- 77% felt a lot better after drama (20)
- 69% thought drama was one of the best things they have done in school (18)
- 65% thought drama helped them understand themselves better (17)
- 35% felt drama was a good way of getting out of class (9)
- 27% thought they did not learn anything from drama (7)
- 12% found it hard to go to class after drama (3)

*Facilitators' and Teachers' Evaluation*

We were pleased with the outcome of the drama project. On the whole we felt our objectives were met. The children learned to work with each other in small groups; to listen to each other; to develop and carry out a project together and to assume responsibility for their actions. The children also seemed to learn to channel their energy away from destructiveness into creativity and to allow themselves to experience roles that they would not normally assume.

There was some generalization back to the classroom but not as much as we had hoped for. The most significant changes were observed in the Grade 7's, particularly in 4 previously very destructive boys and girls and in 2 of the withdrawn children. The teachers were aware that all the children enjoyed the drama, and that many of them appeared to feel better about themselves and seemed to get along better in school.

Behavioral changes in the Grade 6's were not so noticeable and several of them would return to the class initially in quite a hyperactive, excited and disruptive mood. More work needs to be done on the "returning-to-classroom" phase and some suggestions are made below in the Conclusions and Implications Section.

As to what constitutes significant change and growth is difficult to assess. The children seemed to feel it and although we saw it occurring over the sessions generally only slight changes were observed by the teachers. It may be that the growth experienced in drama is not readily apparent and takes time to manifest itself. For example, two boys whom the author worked with five years ago have recently published a book in which they described, in part, the important role that creative drama played in their lives (Mildiner & House, 1975). More accurate measures of change (such as pre- and post tests) are clearly needed here.

*DISCUSSION*

Counselling and psychological growth occurred for the students on an indirect level through involvement with their peers on a project. The drama seemed to allow them to deal on a symbolic level, without too much cognitive awareness, with certain unresolved developmental and psychological issues. Though the writer was aware of the underlying psychological issues that the students were dealing with in their plays, he did not verbalize these or make interpretations of them. The facilitators kept their input focused on the task of constructing the drama.

We expected that the students would and could carry out this project. We clarified conflicts between them at times, tried to represent both points of view, but left the decisions to the group.

*Stages and Themes.* The outstanding characteristic of the drama was the evolution that occurred in both the group processes and in the dramatic themes. These will now be discussed in terms of both Freudian and Piagetian frameworks.

It is well known that in the puberty period there is a tremendous increase in libidinal energy and a re-activation of the intra-psychic struggle between the id, ego and superego (Freud, 1948). When the id gains the dominant position in this struggle, behavior greatly deteriorates. In Freudian terms, the behavior we observed in the regressive (or chaotic) phase would be called pre-oedipal: the gross-motor activity, the narcissism and exhibitionism and the concern with orality (i.e., drinking and dracula plays). By giving the children the freedom of choice (i.e. by letting them do the plays they wanted to do) it seems that they were able to express and re-work some unresolved issues from earlier developmental stages.

This "return" to an earlier developmental level is common in early adolescence generally (Offer, 1969). It is just that we used the regression therapeutically by clearly defining the space and time where it could take place. Wallace (1973) has commented on the importance of providing clearly defined protective boundaries ("temenos") in which regression can occur. It has been my experience that the failure to provide such a controlled space results in chaos and destruction with no inner, psychological growth. These boundaries would include preparation for entry into "emotional" time, time spent in "emotional" time and preparation for re-entry into "ordinary" time. In our case, "emotional" time would be the drama sessions and "ordinary" time, the classroom situation. Preparation for entry would be the warm-up discussions as to what play to do and preparation for re-entry would be the review of the video tape and the discussion of it.

Also, we feel by allowing regression within the setting of drama, and with adults present, we probably compacted and shortened the period of regressive play. This enabled the students to move on to other psychological themes. It should be emphasized that we did not encourage or promote regression. We gave the children the freedom to do the dramas they wanted. It seemed to us that this group of "acting out" children needed to rework those particular themes and hence went directly to them. When the writer has done creative drama in "normal" classrooms he did not experience this

degree of regression; rather the children acted out social issues (dominance themes, family, teacher, and boy-girl conflicts) and comedy.

The struggle between dependency and independence is another central theme of adolescence and one that becomes re-activated in puberty. From a Freudian point of view the issue of dependence versus independence reflects a child's need to break his or her emotional ties with mother. The child is tied to mother by its need for nurturance and independence occurs when the child can break some of this reliance on mother and find ways of nurturing self. We saw this in the themes of the children and particularly in the plays that centred around "bars" and "dracula". These plays involved the conflict of oral dependency (drinking) and the fear of psychological annihilation that comes from perpetuating this dependency for too long (i.e., symbolized by the threat of dracula and the police). On another level, we can see the struggle here between the id ("getting drunk in the bars") on one side and the superego on the other side (the police taking them off to jail).

We believe the dramas enabled the children to work and re-work this theme symbolically until the issue was more or less resolved. That is, pretending to be drunk — walking in a drunk fashion lets them work out some oral needs and enables them to move on to another developmental stage. This movement occurred slowly over time (1 to 2 months) and was seen in the second phase where the dramas were controlled at the beginning (i.e., playing their drunk parts well) but disintegrated into chaos at the end (when the police came to arrest them and a disorganized fight followed).

In the third phase, that of control, the students were dealing with other adolescent themes — those of ego identity, peer group relations and the establishment of dominance-submission hierarchies. In the early phases of these dramas the emphasis was on dominance and "grabbing" leadership. They all wanted to play "the Fonze". It was hard to get them to develop a plot because they were all vying for the leadership role. Slowly, clear-cut hierarchical positions developed based on strength and once this was established the group started to work effectively as a whole. Each member of the group or "gang" had a role to play but the parts were clearly not equal, with the weaker members playing only walk-on parts while the "Fonze" dominated the action. Hartup (1970) has observed that children quickly develop dominance-submission hierarchies in whatever group they find themselves.

The dominance themes led to controlled, aggressive plays which emphasized another adolescent theme —

that of moral development. These were plays of "cops and robbers" — the struggle between "good and bad" and "right and wrong" — with the good clearly winning. Here, every member of the group had an equally important part. There was no "key" figure; all were equally strong. Their ego identities appeared well formed and they functioned in the drama effectively and independently.

In these two themes (dominance and moral development) the underlying psychological issues seemed to centre around the development of the ego (as exemplified by the hero figure, the "Fonze") and the integration of the ego and superego (the "good guys" and the "cops" became very concerned with "fighting crime"). In the dominance themes, the weaker members of the hierarchy developed their ego strength through identification with the "Fonze", as his admirers or side-kicks. In the moral themes the children saw each other as equals. There were no incidences of regression or chaos in these themes, reflecting perhaps, regulation and control of the id by the ego and superego and the development of individual ego identities.

At first, when we observed the older girls' group, we thought that in comparison to the boys they were not interested in dominance themes but rather social issues. However, on closer inspection we became aware that there were strong dominance issues underlying the social dramas that they were doing, but that these were not as obvious as the boys'. For example, in the shoplifting scene we noticed that: (a) the girl shoplifter so terrified the store manager that she let her off; (b) the "bully" girl on the play ground ruined the other girls' games and (c) in the "mugging" scene, the girls assumed the dominant position over the boys. This "covert" concern with power by girls has been observed by other researchers (Sutton-Smith & Sarasta, 1972) and corrects the earlier belief that girls are not interested in power hierarchies.

The moral development issue received further elaboration in the social dramas of the girls. Here the struggle between right and wrong, dependence and independence was depicted from real life scenes of the family and the school. It was "us against them" situation. "We are right. We know what is best for us and we can manage on our own without parents or teachers."

Piaget (1948) has attributed this "captivation-by-the-ideal" to the adolescents' new found capacity for abstraction which tends to result in a pre-occupation with moral issues and a pre-mature sense of autonomy.

The last phase was characterized by flexibility, spontaneity, and humor. The boys and girls now worked together in one large group. It seemed that the separation by the seventh graders into homogeneous groups for the first five months was important in that it allowed them to solidify their own ego identities and from that position of strength they could then begin to relate effectively to members of the opposite sex.

It seemed here in this last phase that for both groups of boys and girls the ego gained ascendancy over the id and the superego. Flexibility and spontaneity were seen in the role-reversals, the humor and the ad-libbing. The students could allow themselves to experiment with roles and behaviors that they normally would not show (i.e., the boys allowing themselves to be beaten up, to be sat on, to be made fun of and the girls dominating the boys). They were able to act freely without fear of chaos caused by the id running amok. Even the police in these dramas were friendly, humorous people (i.e., not stereotyped character representations) who acted somewhat unconventionally. The last drama — the song and dance routine from the Bay City Roller's Saturday Night theme — reflected the strength of the group by its ability to demonstrate the physical closeness and intimacy (of dancing) before disbanding. Termination of early adolescent groups is usually difficult and, if the preparation has not been done, the last session is usually a disaster.

In sum, if we look at all of the above stages from a Piagetian point of view, it seems that in a microcosm, the students evolved through the three stages of moral-development as delineated by Kohlberg (1970). For example, the *preconventional stage*, where personal gratification and "doing what one can get away with" has priority, was seen in the chaotic or regressive phase. The *conventional stage*, accepting standards of society, was seen in the control phase and the *post-conventional stage*, the developing of personal principles and standards, was seen in the flexible and humorous phase. This does not mean that these students have resolved the problems of adolescence. Kramer (1968) has shown that regression and re-integration at a higher developmental level is a common pattern in and of itself. It does mean though that these children have had a successful experience at several developmental stages and because of this might be better able to cope with the other developmental tasks of adolescence.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Several conclusions and implications can be drawn from this study. Creative drama is:

- (1) Popular with early adolescent children who have a high need for attention.
- (2) Perceived by these children as helping them: (a) get along in school; (b) feel better and (c) understand themselves better.
- (3) A useful technique whereby one counsellor can work with 6 to 8 acting-out children at one time.
- (4) A method whereby students can role-play fantasies and issues that are of concern to them and one which helps them develop the ability to work together in small groups.

Counsellors using the creative drama approach have to:

- (a) Be able to tolerate considerable anxiety and confusion when the students enter the regressive phase and have a belief that the students will eventually be able to work their way through it to a more mature developmental level.
- (b) Ensure that they have a "protected" area for the drama sessions. This means that the noise from the sessions does not disrupt the other activities of the school and that other children do not "break into" the drama sessions.
- (c) Devise appropriate methods for re-entry of the drama students back into the classroom. This was the area of weakness in the present study. It became apparent to us that 30 minutes is too short for drama as it does not allow enough time for discussion or time to relax the students in order to help them make the transition back into the classroom. In future, we would recommend that the sessions be 40 minutes long and that they occur in the last period in the morning or afternoon.
- (d) Keep the lines of communication open with the teachers. This may mean explaining to the teachers the purpose of creative drama, the stages it tends to go through and the effects it may have on the students' classwork. For example, if the students are missing important classwork, arrangements will have to be made whereby the students can catch up without burdening the teacher with extra work after school.
- (e) Devise effective assessment measures.

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