1990

Implementating the theatre/drama portion of the visual and performing arts framework in the elementary schools of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District

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**Implementing the theatre/drama portion of the Visual and Performing Arts
Framework in the elementary schools of the San Ramon Valley Unified
School District**

Ragusano, Nicholas A., Jr., M.A.

San Jose State University, 1990

U·M·I

300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

Implementating the Theatre/Drama Portion
of the
Visual and Performing Arts Framework
in the Elementary Schools of the San Ramon Valley Unified
School District

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Theatre Arts
San Jose State University

In partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

by

Nicholas A. Ragusano, Jr.

November, 1990

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF
THEATRE ARTS

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ABSTRACT

IMPLEMENTING THE THEATRE/DRAMA PORTION OF THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS FRAMEWORK IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF THE SAN RAMON VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

by
Nicholas A. Ragusano, Jr.

This thesis explores problems related to the implementation of the theatre/drama portion of The Visual and Performing Arts Framework.

Throughout this paper, the reader will find there is much confusion in both the interpretation of the framework and the development of guidelines to fully implement a program. Though many teachers have knowledge of the framework, much has been gained through the School Improvement Program.

Monies have generally been earmarked for Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science leaving little or no money for theatre or dance. There are funds available for classroom and instrumental music as well as art supplies.

This thesis presents arguments given by those in decision making roles about the nature of funding and curriculum development for the theatre portion of Visual and Performing Arts. Conclusions drawn reflect attitudes of teachers as well as administrators with regards to theatre and its implementation in elementary schools.

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Chapter One

The Problem and Its History

In 1982, the State Department of Education of the State of California adopted a framework for the development of curriculum and materials in the area of visual and performing arts. The title of this document is The Visual and Performing Arts Framework. The following is a statement from the Visual and Performing Arts Framework, indicating its intent, goals, and objectives:

Drama and theatre are subject disciplines which emphasize the use of the intellect as well as the development of a person's sensitivity, creativity, and the capacity to make reasoned, aesthetic decisions while extending the range of human experience. Because drama is concerned with the uniqueness of the individual, students who are guided in drama and theatre activities acquire knowledge of and regard for themselves and others as individuals. These disciplines develop within the student a positive self-concept, creative thinking, and an ability to perceive and interact successfully with others.

Since drama has language as its primary component, students involved in drama/theatre programs develop poise, confidence, ease, and versatility in verbal presentation. Drama/theatre, when taught as a subject discipline, develops the creative, critical, and communicative potential of all students. Drama/theatre education needs to be a regular offering at all grade levels. Students are interested in drama, and, when given the opportunity to participate in theatrical activity, respond with vigor and dedication. It is a powerful subject for enriching the entire curriculum.¹

Processes of Drama/Theatre

The primary educational goal of drama/theatre is the development of each student's imagination and problem-solving and communicative potential. Through an increasing engagement in dramatic processes, students experience theatre; and through their increasing grasp of dramatic concepts, they understand theatre.

The processes of drama/theatre are the avenues by which the student experiences and thus develops concepts about the art. Engagement in the processes of originating, performing and producing, and responding develops an individual's capacities which underlie all creative dramatic activity -- concentrating, listening, observing, replacing, remembering, imagining, feeling, recognizing, differentiating, experimenting, and evaluating.²

The authors of The Visual and Performing Arts Framework appear to be trying to create a philosophical basis for including theatre/drama into the school curriculum. This framework focuses on four strands; 1) artistic perception, 2) creative expression, 3) arts history, and 4) valuing. The rhetoric of the above passage, although vague as to how all of this is to be accomplished, does make a comment about the four strands, albeit indirectly. It talks about "...listening, observing...", "...originating, performing, and producing...", "...develops concepts about the art," and "...evaluating."

Within each of the four disciplines (dance, music, theatre/drama, visual arts) the authors of the framework do set up more specific suggestions for potential lesson development. It has not been the intention, however, to actually present a complete lesson by lesson curriculum guide for all to follow. Instead, the purpose of the various frameworks in the State of California, according to Miguel Muto, Consultant for the Visual and Performing Arts Unit of the State Department of Education for the State of California, is to give "guidance to those who are developing curricula and materials to go with these curricula."³

The frameworks are the result of numerous hours, days, weeks, even years of work by dedicated professionals in the many educational disciplines. Therefore, according to Mr. Muto, the State Department of Education places a very high value on the works contained in these volumes and through various means, including the School Improvement Program (see Chapter Five for a complete discussion), expects local districts to become familiar with them and use them in the development of their own curriculum guides and standards.

A rationale for the inclusion of arts education was presented 1986 by an association of various arts education conferences and committees:

A primary rationale for the existence of formal instruction in the arts disciplines at the K-12 level is to provide for the development of individual knowledge and skills. The rationale has led the arts education community to take a much broader view of its role than simply preparing professional artists for career entry. In fact, the bulk of K-12 arts education activity is devoted to working with individuals who will find their careers in areas outside the arts; and it is here, in the arts education of the general public, that the individual versus mass dichotomy in cultural formation becomes critical.

If the formation of mass cultural values is our only goal in cultural formation, we would do better to dismantle ninety percent of the current arts education effort and reinvest those resources in mass media applications, including advertising and other forms of persuasion.

If, on the other hand, the role of the arts education community in cultural formation is to develop citizens having knowledge and skill sufficient to be the basis of a personal and active participation in one of more of the arts, then the arts education community and the funds expended on it are far too small for the magnitude of the task thus presented. An appropriate philosophical base for arts education would address the individual versus mass dichotomy and demonstrate the value of an enlarged and

better funded arts education community capable of greater positive influence in cultural formation.

Although not quoted or directly referred to in the framework, the above excerpt is the fundamental rationale for the inclusion of arts education in the schools. It is not the intent of the framework to create professional actors, dancers, or musicians but rather to instill in the students an awareness and appreciation of the arts as a means to fully understand their culture. The "participation," mentioned above, can mean the fullest sense of "participation" as an artist in one or more of the arts or as an informed advocate and/or consumer.

The Briefing Papers imply that the educational community must take a position that filling students' minds and bodies with knowledge and skill only is not nearly enough. Students must become aware of their own unique values as well as the values of the cultures in which they live and study. As an "active participant" the student must be able to make his or her own mark on the value systems. A saying that has been around for some time puts this idea in perspective: "Education is not filling a bucket but instead lighting a candle" (anon.).

The questions that this paper proposes to answer are:

1. If theatre is to be included in a school's curriculum, to what extent has the administration implemented the framework?
2. How have school administrators and the school board and teachers, etc. interpreted the framework and

allocated time and funds specifically for supporting theatre in the curriculum?

3. If the framework has not been interpreted equitably, is it the framework itself or WHY? ("Equitably" as use here refers to the choices made to include all four disciplines--visual, music, theatre, and dance--as part of the curriculum and the funding that the choices imply.)
4. Have funds been spent to bring in outside performances?

Choosing a suitable study group

The San Ramon Valley Unified School District provides one of many possible examples of the problems facing educators throughout the state in the area of arts education. As a public school district in Contra Costa County, it is bound by the Education Code of the State of California and subscribes to the framework described in these pages.

This thesis describes the condition pertaining to one school district, the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. The results of this study and the evidence that supports these results, cannot be generalized to include the California Public School System as a whole. They are intended, however, to demonstrate the problems this one district has had in the implementation of the Visual and Performing Arts Framework. These same conditions and problems may or may not apply to other districts. This research is an initial investigation in the problems of implementating curriculums such as visual and performing

arts. Its purpose is to provide a motivation for additional research into this problem.

The S.R.V.U.S.D. is a growing district as evidenced in the addition of schools (two in the past five years and more planned) and has a history of having to deal with this large growth and at the same time provide adequate education to the thousands of students within its boundaries.

The K-6 schools of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District were chosen as the study schools because of the access of the schools and the district by this author.⁵

Additionally the San Ramon schools provide education to a broad based socio-economic student body including families from near poverty status to upper-management level incomes of well over \$100,000.00 per year. It is a district in which the arts play a visible role at the high school level as indicated by the published courses of studies. The intermediate schools have a lesser impact on the arts also as indicated by courses of study.

The elementary schools have courses of study but these do not cover more than the visual arts and music for the K-6 level (more about this in a later chapter).

Academically, the school district as a whole scores at the upper end of the scale in the California Assessment Program (CAP) Testing.

San Ramon Valley Unified School District, however, is in the band of school districts labeled low wealth due to

conditions set by the State of California following the Seranno vs Priest court decision concerning the equalization of monies for education. Consequently San Ramon schools get about \$1000.00 per student less than some surrounding school districts in the same socio-economic area.

At present, in the San Ramon Schools, there are three high schools, one continuation high, four intermediate schools (with dissimilar groupings from grades four through eighth to seventh and eighth only), and thirteen elementary schools with a new elementary planned for opening in the fall of 1989. Developed from a combination of elementary and high school districts into one unified district by a unification election in 1964, the district was established July 1, 1965.

To get a better understanding of the place of theatre in the curriculum of the San Ramon Schools, a brief history of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District is included here along with a profile of the curriculum.

An overview of the San Ramon Valley Schools

The Superintendent of Schools of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District, during an interview in August of 1989, indicated that the district as a whole prides itself in developing an elementary curriculum which meets the needs of its wide variety of students--from those who need special

help in specific curricular areas to those who are part of the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program. To this end, the district has established curriculum review committees that regularly review and revise the various curricula and materials used in the diverse subjects. He further indicated that from these committees and subsequent board action, a curriculum guide for elementary schools was developed and published by the San Ramon Valley Unified School District.

While music and visual arts are part of this guide, any mention of theatre is absent except for a brief reference to participation "in a scripted play" in the Third Grade Language Arts summary. There are courses of study in theatre at both the intermediate and high school levels. But in the elementary school, no such course of study has formally been adopted by the Board of Education to be included in the Course of Study for Elementary School. No reason has ever been stated for this lack of a course of study. No documentation exists to explain this lack of action. When queried, no one in the district seemed to be able or willing to address this issue.

In order to comply with a proposed testing of minimum competencies (state mandated) at specific grades, committees were established by the district administration and the board of education to develop guidelines for these courses of study and to prepare objectives or lists of expected

outcomes. Since many of the state frameworks were not completed at this time (mid 1970's--some were only drafts) there was no approved document for the development of courses of study. Therefore committees worked from their own experiences and expertise.

On April 19, 1977, the Theatre Arts Committee of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District adopted a proposal that would give guidelines for the inclusion of theatre instruction in the elementary school. Within this proposal was a set of objectives for the third and sixth grades which included the following:

- ° By the third grade the students will have experienced activities with body freedom and control.
 - i.e. rhythm sense (natural)
 - expressing emotional feelings
 - openness-releasing inhibitions
 - sensory experience
 - observation and imitation
- ° By the third grade the students will have experience or be exposed to activities in pretending as short term, on going classroom activities.
 - i.e. spontaneous, creative improvisation
 - pantomime
 - skits
 - plays
- ° By the third grade the students will have experienced plays.
 - i.e. puppet
 - story adaptations
 - commercially prepared scripts
 - Reader's Theatre
- ° By the third grade the students will have viewed formal acting productions with emphasis on appreciative listening.

- ° By the sixth grade the students will have experienced activities with body freedom and control.
 - i.e. rhythm sense (natural)
 - expressing emotional feelings
 - openness-releasing inhibition
 - sensory experience
 - observation and imitation
- ° By the sixth grade the students will have experience or be exposed to activities in pretending as short term, or as on-going classroom activities.
 - i.e. improvisation-spontaneous, creative
 - pantomime
 - skits
 - plays
 - directing
- ° By the sixth grade the students will have experienced plays.
 - i.e. puppet
 - story adaptations
 - commercially prepared scripts
 - Reader's Theatre
 - technical-designing and construction
 - make-up
 - costuming
 - sound
 - props
 - elementary management-room arrangement
 - ushering⁶
 - programs

There is no documentation available to show justification of the above proposed minimum competencies. Since these were developed prior to a state framework, the Theatre Arts Committee could not use state guidelines. Documentation might have existed at one time, but a fire at the district office destroyed many papers. The proposed guidelines above were found by this author while exploring visual and performing arts documents that did survive the fire.

According to the superintendent some, if not all, of this proposal is in actual use, irrespective of the lack of theatre in the district Course of Study. He implied that programs which exist rely on individual teacher knowledge, skills, and/or interests rather than on any prescribed course of study.

In keeping with the initial development of a proposed course of study in theatre for elementary grades (K - 6), the district, throughout its history, did provide leadership for the inclusion of arts education and theatre education, specifically. This leadership was embodied by two individuals early in the history of the district--Art Dougherty and Jeanne Rinaldi (visual arts coordinator until 1971). The position of visual arts coordinator was combined with the performing arts after Ms Rinaldi's resignation. The new position of visual and performing arts coordinator was given to Mr. Dougherty.⁷

To get a perspective of the curriculum demands of the elementary teacher, it is necessary to understand what a typical day in the classroom is like. The mandated areas are tested in various ways. These include state testing (California Assessment Program) at grades three and six, minimum competencies (district developed although required by the state) at grades three and five, and Chapter One eligibility testing (various published tests are used for

this) in all grades within schools that receive Chapter One federal funding.

A typical day in an elementary school classroom consists of 305 minutes of teacher/student contact time. Within this day the teacher must cover the various mandated curriculum areas. These include:

- Language Arts
 - Reading
 - Grammar
 - Spelling
 - Writing

- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- Physical Education

While some parts of the language arts curriculum and math are actually taught every day, science, and social studies are given varying amounts of time during the course of a week. Some physical education, music, and science is taught by specialists in order to provide preparation time for elementary school teachers. Visual arts are taught in a myriad of ways, depending on the expertise of the individual teacher. Music, if taught at all in the classroom, is given the same treatment. In those schools which do not use music as part of the teacher preparation period, a classroom music specialist does come into the classroom to teach music--but for only one fourth of a school year and every other year. Some teachers rely on parent volunteers to help teach either visual arts or music or both.⁸ Theatre arts, where it is taught, consists of plays, either written and performed by

the students, professionally written scripts from various publications such as play magazines (including Plays for Children, a monthly magazine found in many school libraries), the basal reader, or commercially available scripts from drama publishing houses.

The process of developing the study
and the conclusions

Theatre/drama education can take many forms. As indicated in the State Framework, it includes both the study of the actual process--how theatre/drama is done--as well as the aesthetics of theatre.

Creative drama and/or role playing, when used for values clarification or problem solving (classroom, school, or community social concerns), is not being considered here as part of theatre education as their purpose is not theatre oriented. If, however, creative drama or role playing is used as a tool to develop an understanding of the process of drama/theatre as stated in the State Framework (see Processes of Drama/Theatre on page 2), then it will be considered in this study.

An investigation into the implementation of the Theatre/Drama portion of the Visual and Performing Arts Framework suggests that the researcher probe beyond the curriculum guides--both published and proposed. Therefore several strategies were taken to acquire the needed data. Interviews with the Superintendent of Schools, the Assistant

Superintendent (in charge of elementary education), the former Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator, along with a survey of teachers were used.

The decision to use these sources was made because of their relative positions in the school district with respect to curriculum development and implementation in the elementary schools. The superintendent was brought into this district by the board of education for many reasons, one of which was to develop more rigorous curricula. He formed curriculum development committees which came to be known as task forces. By the time this paper was written, three of these task forces had completed revisions for K-6 education: Language Arts, Mathematics, and Social Studies.

San Ramon School District's assistant superintendent in charge of elementary education has a major role in curriculum development. It is his responsibility to coordinate the various task forces in the carrying out of their duties.

The former Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator, who has since retired, provided an historical reference as he was directly responsible for arts education in the San Ramon Schools.

Teachers, being the actual implementors of the curriculum, have intimate knowledge of the subjects they teach. However, not all teachers have the same knowledge or skills. This difference becomes important when looking at

implementation of programs not generally taught in teacher preparation curricula at the colleges and universities.

Much of the data that was used to formulate the conclusions in Chapter Six comes from Chapter Two (The Administration's View), Chapter Three (Teacher Survey), Chapter Four (Results of the Survey of Teachers), and Chapter Five (Allocations of Time and Funds). Chapter Two contains data from interviews with various administrators of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. Chapter Five also discusses the School Improvement Program, a state funded program which provides additional monies beyond the normal allocations.

Chapter Two

The Administration's View

To understand better the position of the administration and school board with regard to theatre education in the elementary school and the interpretation of the Visual and Performing Arts Framework, interviews were held with various administrators at the district level in August of 1988, and Art Dougherty (Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator, retired) in February of 1988. The questions on pages four and five of this paper were discussed with These administrators. Mr. Dougherty provided historical background.

The Superintendent's view

While the superintendent was familiar with the framework, as he is with all the frameworks from the state, it was not his or the board's intention to form a curriculum committee during the 1988-89 school year to review it. But he indicated that the plan was to review it and develop a curriculum based on the framework by the 1990-91 school year.

The district has just completed three such plans in the areas of Language Arts, Math, and Social Studies. Also, the district had to deal with drug and family life education with relation to drug abuse and the introduction of AIDS

prevention education. When asked why the Visual and Performing Arts curriculums had not been addressed, he responded by saying that asking the teachers to take on one more task force, as these committees are called, would "cause the teachers to go nuts!"

It was the administration's contention that the district took on more than it should have in a one year period. Therefore, no other committees were formed in the 1987-1988 school year. What was considered, however, was to place the district on the same review calendar as the state. This action would allow an orderly review of all the state frameworks and associated curricula.

According to the superintendent and his assistants, this does not mean that teachers are not teaching theatre within the school. But it is being taught sporadically by those who choose to include it. It was pointed out that there are many opportunities for performance at the schools in all the performing arts. These included music concerts, drama productions, and art exhibitions. A study of documents, playbills, and programs collected by the former Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator during his tenure, gave evidence of these opportunities. But most of this evidence pointed to activities in the intermediate and high schools. Generally there was a lack of documentary evidence for the elementary schools except for an occasional concert for instrumental and/or choral music. Further, no formal

curriculum is in place district wide specifically for theatre education in the elementary school.

The district administration concluded that the problem was not in the framework but in the needs of the district to approach the mandated curricula now and to proceed with the non-mandated curricula at a later date--according to the calendar discussed earlier.

A view from the coordinator of curriculum (K-6)

San Ramon School's assistant superintendent, who heads the various curriculum development committees for the elementary grades (K -6), agrees with the assessment of the superintendent. It was his opinion that it would have been too much for the district to take on one more curriculum review. He also indicated that he, too, felt very strongly that arts education, including theatre/drama, ought to be included in the curriculum in elementary school.

He did indicate, however, that the district will be following the adoption cycle mandated by the State of California. The visual and performing arts curriculum was reviewed between April and June of 1989 on the state level. (The state has published a new framework which will be available in mid 1989.) Therefore the district will have a review of the visual and performing arts curriculum during the next cycle which will start in the 1989-90 school year.

**SCHEDULE FOR CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION OF
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
English								
Lang.		(A)	<>		[F]-----[F]			
Arts								
VisPerf								
Biling.			(A)	<>		[F]-----[F]		
Bicult*								
History								
Social	-----[F]			(A)	<>		[F]-----[F]	
Science								
ESL/								
Foreign	[F]-----[F]				(A)	<>		[F]---
Lang.								
Science		[F]-----[F]				(A)	<>	
Math			[F]-----[F]				(A)	<>
Health				[F]-----[F]				(A)

[F] FRAMEWORK

(A) STATE BOARD ADOPTION OF INSTRUCTION MTRLS

<> Newly adopted materials
available for order by
districts March 1

Instructional Mtrls Evaluation: Apr-Jun
Curriculum Comm recommendations: Jul-Aug
State Board Adoption: Sep-Oct

* After 1989, Bilingual/Bicultural
materials will be adopted as part
each subject area adoption.

Direct questions to:

Office of Curriculum Framework and Textbook Development
State Department of Education
P.O. Box 944272
Sacramento, CA 94244-2720

Ph: (916) 445-2731

1/5/88
CFTD
SDE *

As can be seen by the chart on the preceding page, the Framework review and curriculum and materials adoption are on a six year cycle. This procedure allows for a systematic review of both the state frameworks in the many curriculum areas and the orderly adoption of teaching materials. The state expects a specific lifetime for teaching materials such as books. This lifetime is six years with consideration in the budget for the replacement of damaged items or the purchasing of new items as the population requires.

Historical evidence

Art Dougherty presented further evidence of the district's commitment to arts education--including Theatre/drama. He indicated that in 1968 a grant was written for NDEA Title II funds (National Defense Education Act) for theatre arts education. This grant consisted of two parts. One was for the acquisition of a portable stage, complete with platforms, pipe batting and curtains. The second part was for complete lighting and sound systems. The grant was approved and the materials were purchased over a two year period.

Mr. Dougherty indicated that there are efforts to include theatre/drama in the elementary school by many interested teachers and administrators. However, a quality program throughout the district does not exist. Mr.

Dougherty did not indicate what he meant by a quality program but it will be assumed that he is referring to the proposed curriculum objectives for the third and sixth grades previously mentioned. This inequity, he says, stems from a lack of a general plan for drama/theatre in the elementary schools.

The administration's goal

The administrators in the S. R. V. U. S. D. have all expressed the same theme throughout the discussions. That is, the district is committed to quality education (none of the administrators clearly defined what was meant nor were any aware of the proposed objectives mentioned earlier) in all areas, including the visual and performing arts. This is the goal of the administration and the board of education. The administrators in this district have generally concurred that the lack of a plan or teaching strategies in the area of theatre/drama is the reason why a program in theatre/drama is not a reality even though they are committed to an education that fully implements the various frameworks published by the State of California Department of Education. They have also given reasons, however, why this commitment has not been fully filled. Most of these "reasons" center around three basic problems--no plan in place, one more thing for teachers to do, and budgetary constraints.

With the district's intention of placing itself in synchronization with the state's curriculum review and adoption cycle, it is the administration's view that a quality program can be adopted and put in place soon. If this is the case, however, then the "problems" suggested above could have been worked out earlier had there been a real commitment by the district to present a quality program--one that is fully aligned with the state frameworks.

Chapter Three

Teacher Survey

To understand better the overall experience and background levels of the teachers in the San Ramon Valley Schools, and to give an overview of the type of theatre activities they are actually doing in their classrooms, a questionnaire was created and sent to all elementary teachers in the schools in the study.

Developing the questions

The participants in the questionnaire were asked to indicate their personal experience in the field of theatre. Although such experience is not a prerequisite for teaching theatre, the question's purpose was to help determine the interest level of the teachers and to get some idea of the level of their expertise in this area.

One of the purposes of this study is to determine if the framework is a useful tool. Therefore they were asked if they were familiar with the framework and, if so, had it been used to help them develop activities within their classrooms.

Among the goals and objectives in the framework is this statement, "These disciplines develop within the student... an ability to perceive and interact successfully with others."¹⁰ This interaction in theatre is with audiences as

well as other people involved with the production. Questions were devised to indicate both the type and sizes of various audiences.

Dorothy Thames Schwartz and Dorothy Aldrich, along with their colleagues, present a very strong argument for the placing of drama or theatre within the school day. This is also a primary goal of the Visual and Performing Arts Framework. Ms Schwartz and Aldrich write:

Why make drama a part of your school day? "Because it's so much fun!" is the usual answer given by children who have experienced creating drama. Valuing the child's enthusiasm, but charged with accountability for his educational progress, most teachers will want additional ideas of what and how drama contributes to the child's development before committing educational time to it.

Every field of study makes its own particular contribution to the generation of knowledge about man and to the development of man as a knower. Drama furnishes knowledge and understanding of man as an individual. Even though the person depicted in drama has attitudes, needs, and objectives in common with others and may even join with them in common endeavors, he is still a particular person and, to some extent, unique.

Because drama is built from the characteristics and qualities of people which constitute and reveal human individuality, children who are guided in creating drama are necessarily involved in acquiring knowledge of and regard for themselves and others as individuals.... The development and appreciation of individuality is basic to the intellectual and social growth of children for it underlies positive self-concept, creative thinking, and the ability to perceive and interact successfully with others¹¹

Teachers cannot teach what they do not know or understand. These authors point out the need for teacher training in areas of limited knowledge. Teachers are the ultimate source of instruction in the schools and are held accountable for this education. Therefore they are admittedly reluctant to devote time to subjects of

questionable value (at least in their eyes)--especially in areas of limited knowledge or skill.

Swartz and Aldrich do support the concepts to which the authors of The Visual and Performing Arts Framework subscribe, namely the four strands to which this paper previously referred. These authors, too, refer to perception of the world about us, creative expression, historical aspects of theatre, and evaluation of the art.

Although the purpose of theatre/drama in the schools is not necessarily to have "fun," Schwartz and Aldrich do make a point by their statement. That is, learning can be "fun" and exciting. The study and practice of theatre in the course of a school's curriculum ought to enhance the understanding of the culture in which one lives. This should be true of the study of all the visual and performing arts as these are the reflections of the culture in which one lives. These authors' statements do make it clear that they promote the study of theatre/drama as a means to help students learn more about their culture. They do not refer to multicultural education, however. This lack of reference might be due to the fact that they wrote this book in 1972--many years before the current emphasis on multicultural education.

Several options were given to respondents of this questionnaire referring to the theatre activities during and after the regular school day--specifically rehearsals.

Aesthetic valuing, according to the framework, is also an important part of the purpose of the teaching of any of the arts. To that end, theatre experiences that are proposed in this framework, cover not only the active participation in producing the work of arts, but also understanding the historical importance of the art. A set of choices for the respondents therefore included activities in history as well as consumers of theatre along with the opportunity to critique performances.

The format

The choice of a questionnaire was made because this seemed to provide the quickest, most efficient way of getting input from the teachers throughout the elementary schools.

The format of the questionnaire was designed around the use of a Scan-Tron computerized answer sheet. This form allowed for five choices per each numbered line. Some of the questions took less than the five possibilities. Many of the questions, however, needed more than the five allotted answer boxes. It was necessary, in those instances, to combine some of the choices, albeit, creating a somewhat awkward, but still usable questionnaire.

The intent, here, was to allow for a computer reading and tallying of the answers.

The questionnaire

With the approval of the Superintendent of Schools, a cover letter was prepared and the questionnaires sent to schools containing a K-6 configuration.

The cover letter that was sent to teachers appears in Appendix II.

The text of the complete questionnaire begins on the next page.

1. Have you had any experience in theatre either as an actor, director, student, or other participant?
a. yes b. no.
2. My experience in theatre has been as (you may choose more than one):
 - a. an actor (including acting classes)
 - b. a director
 - c. a student (of theatre studies; i.e. history of theatre or theatre literature)
 - d. production crew; i.e. properties, sets, costumes, make-up, etc.
3. I have taught theatre arts in my classroom.
a. yes b. no
4. Are you familiar with the Drama/Theatre portion of the California Visual and Performing Arts Framework?
a. yes b. no.
5. If "yes," have you used it as a basis for theatre activities in your classroom?
a. yes b. no.
6. If you have had theatre arts activities in your classroom, was this a (you may choose more than one):
 - a. full production--costumes, lighting, sets, etc.
 - b. classroom production--w/ minimal costumes and/or sets
 - c. skits only
 - d. theatre games or readers' theatre
7. Which statement was true of the theatre activities in your classroom (you may choose more than one answer)?
 - a. presented to school only
 - b. presented to school and community
 - c. presented to community only
 - d. charged admission to community
 - e. rehearsals were during the regular school day
8. Same question--other possibilities.
 - a. rehearsal techniques were taught
 - b. acting techniques were taught
 - c. rehearsals were after school only
 - d. this was a musical
 - e. this included dance

9. Same question--more possibilities.
 - a. some theatre history was also taught
 - b. students were given the opportunity to be an audience for other theatrical presentations - either amateur or professional
 - c. students were given the opportunity to critique performances given by others as well as themselves
 - d. production was open only to students in your classroom
10. Same question--another set of possibilities.
 - a. production was open to students from a limited set of grades
 - b. production was open to all students in school
 - c. total audience (not including school assemblies but including multiple community performances) was under 100
 - d. total audience was between 100 and 200
 - e. total audience was between 200 and 300
11. More choices.
 - a. total audience was between 300 and 400
 - b. total audience was between 400 and 500
 - c. total audience was between 500 and 600
 - d. total audience was between 600 and 700
 - e. total audience was over 700

If these questions do not adequately describe your situation with regards to theatre in your own classroom, please take the time to describe what it is you do.

Thank you very much for your time.

Nick Ragusano

Additional comments: _____

Parts of the questionnaire, including the option to identify themselves, were suggested by the San Ramon Valley Unified School District administration as information received will be useful when teachers are sought for membership on the curriculum review committee for visual and performing arts (see Chapter Two).

Following the return of the questionnaire, the data was reviewed. The findings are in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four

Results of the Survey of Teachers

There are approximately 100 teachers teaching grades kindergarten through sixth grade in K-6 schools in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. Thirty-three teachers responded to the questionnaire. Below is a chart of the results.

TABLE OF RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions:		No.	Percent
1.	a experience - yes	18	55
	b experience - no	12	36
	Those who did not respond on answer crd	3	9
	Total	33	100
2.	a actor	11	33
	b director	5	15
	c student of theatre (hist. or lit.)	6	18
	d production crew/technical	12	36
	Some teachers participated in several areas		
3.	a taught theatre in classroom - yes	17	52
	b taught theatre in classroom - no	12	36
	Those who did not respond on answer crd	4	12
	Total	33	100
4.	a familiar w/framework - yes	8	24
	b familiar w/framework - no	22	67
	Those who did not respond	3	9
	Total	33	100
5.	a use framework for activities - yes	6	18
	b use framework for activities - no	9	27
	Those who did not respond on answer crd	18	55
	Total	33	100

Questions 6 through 11 could have multiple responses. Therefore the total for each number may total more than 33 or 100%.

6.	a	full prod. - costumes, lights, sets	5	15
	b	class prod. - minimal costumes etc.	15	45
	c	skits only	9	27
	d	theatre games or reader's theatre	8	24
7.	a	presented to school only	12	36
	b	presented to school and community	11	33
	c	presented to community only	3	9
	d	charged admission to community	1	3
	e	rehearsals during reg. school day	15	45
8.	a	rehearsal techniques taught	9	27
	b	acting techniques taught	13	39
	c	rehearsals after school only	2	6
	d	production was a musical	3	9
	e	production included dance	5	15
9.	a	some theatre history also taught	1	3
	b	students were an audience	13	39
	c	students critiqued a performance	5	15
	d	production open only to classroom	12	36
10.	a	prod. open to limited set of grades	5	15
	b	prod. open to entire school	4	12
	c	total audience (not assemblies) <100	8	24
	d	total audience between 100 - 200	0	0
	e	total audience between 200 - 300	0	0
11.	a	total audience between 300 - 400	1	3
	b	total audience between 400 - 500	1	3
	c	total audience between 500 - 600	1	3
	d	total audience between 600 - 700	1	3
	e	total audience over 700	1	3

Summary of Data

The data implies (and a closer look at the answer sheets confirm) that those teachers who had some theatre experience (55%) either as an actor (33%), director (15%), or back stage and/or technical (36%) are the same teachers who teach theatre in the classroom. Interesting, also, was the fact that of the eight teachers who were familiar with the Visual and Performing Arts Framework, six actually used it as a tool to develop classroom activities.

An indication of the commitment of the teaching of theatre as part of the classroom is found in the rehearsal times of the productions. Forty-five percent of the teachers used class time only for rehearsal, whereas only six percent used after school time only. Therefore 49% have a combination of both in school and after school rehearsals.

Theatre is a performance activity. And this is borne out by the fact that 78% of the productions were presented to either the school, the community, or both. Only one of the respondents indicated that admission was charged (presumably to offset the costs of the production).

A very significant number of teachers who provide theatre activities within the classroom do so without being familiar with the framework. It is not known if the various activities that these teachers provide match the curriculum suggested by the framework.

At first reading there seems to be a curious discrepancy when comparing the total number of teachers with theatre experience (question #1) and total number of teachers who did not respond to question #5. The two numbers when added equal more than 33 (100%). Three teachers did not fill out the answer sheet; these wrote comments only. There were fifteen (50%) respondents who did not answer this question. None of these fifteen indicated why they did not answer. No conclusions can be drawn from these figures.

More curious, however, was the 67% non-response to the questionnaire. Again, no conclusions can be drawn from this figure. Assumptions can, however, be made. It can be assumed that there is a significant percentage of teachers who are not interested in theatre in the classroom or in promoting theatre as another art form. Another assumption could be that many teachers just did not take the time to fill out the questionnaire, forgot about it, or lost it.

But these assumptions do make one wonder about the importance of theatre in the classroom where these teachers are concerned.

Additional comments

A number of teachers wrote additional comments. Among these were the three (9%) respondents who did not fill in the answer sheet. These comments fell into several categories:

1. description of student created plays and skits

"Student created plays and performances are my main focus at the elementary school."

"Students have a large part in making up script and costuming. Not a lot goes into props -- emphasis is on acting."

"Students have been given the opportunity to write scripts from literature presented in class."

2. description of who participated in plays and types of audiences

"I have done plays with my reading groups and with my class. They certainly are minimal in costume etc. and are presented to other 4th grade classes."

"Productions in my classroom are performed by my students for fellow classmates, other 1st or K class and occasionally for parents."

"...Our 'creative dramatics' includes [sic] reenacting familiar songs and stories using picture props, puppets (child made and commercial) or hats (child made)."

"Did Snow White for all school and in PM (evening) for families."

3. an explanation of answers

"In answering your questions I was referring sometimes to what I've done in the classroom and other times to our TWIN CREEKS ALL SCHOOL PRODUCTION. Every child from K - 6 was in the latter."

4. and finally one that doesn't fit anywhere except as an audience

"I'm a very appreciative spectator."

The comments by those who did fill out the questionnaire, as well as those who did not, indicate that more than seventeen teachers do provide theatre activities. In fact the three who did not fill out the answer sheets indicated through their comments that they, too, provided some experiences. Therefore, it means that 20 (61%) of the teachers who returned the questionnaires taught some theatre in the classroom instead of 17 (52%) indicated in the table of results.

A number of the comments indicate that theatre is integrated with other curriculum areas. California has adopted a literature based reading and language program as

part of the Language Arts Framework. Some teachers use literature as a means of writing scripts for skits or short plays. The integration of theatre with music is also mentioned. Although not mentioned in the comments, a discussion and personal observation with some teachers has shown integration with the history/social studies curriculum as well.

Chapter Five

Allocation of Time and Funds

Individual school principals allocate various funds within the school served. Monies are generated from several sources. The general fund of the district provides the basic monies for teachers, books, and supplies. The elementary schools in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District are also part of a special state funded program referred to as the School Improvement Program (SIP).

The School Improvement Program uses as its guide the various state frameworks including the Visual and Performing Arts Framework. As one reads this chapter the importance of SIP and its funding become quite clear. It will also become clear that the schools which participate in SIP must become more aware of the various frameworks including visual and performing arts.

The School Improvement Program (originally Early Childhood Education) was developed by the Legislature of the State of California in the late 1960's. Its purpose was to promote a more rigorous education by providing additional monies to schools, rather than to districts, that participated in the program. Initially the program covered only grades one through three, but in the mid 1980's it was expanded to include K-6.

How the School Improvement Program works

The SIP committees at each school are comprised of teachers, parents, principal of the school, and members of the community who represent various educational interests. These committees review curriculum areas specifically covered by the SIP plans. Each year the plan is revised by the faculty of the participating school. And every third year the school is reviewed by a SIP team in order to make sure that the plan has been implemented properly.

One component of this SIP plan is visual and performing arts. A typical plan involves several aspects of development.

Developing a plan

First, the present or actual curriculum area is reviewed to see if it meets the needs of the students and teachers. The committee (made up of faculty members of the school in question) interviews the teachers within the school to find out what is being done at the classroom level. It is noted whether or not the activities conform to district guidelines (if there are any in place). With respect to music and visual arts, there is a district guide with which to compare. There is no such formal guide in theatre arts.

Next, discrepancies are noted between what is being done and what is desired--either by the district guidelines

or by teachers themselves. These discrepancies may fall in the area of time allocated, specific instructions, funding or any or all of these. The committee then discusses what choices are possible.

After completing the first two phases and the discussion of possible choices, the committee then presents recommendations. These recommendations are written as a part of the SIP document along with the needs assessment and discrepancies.

The entire school staff then reviews the completed document. If it meets with the approval of the majority of the staff, then it is adopted. Additional changes or suggestions may be written at this point in time.

The creation of a plan follows guidelines set down by the State of California under legislation which provides monies for the California School Improvement Program. The guidelines for drama/theatre are not separated from the other arts. As the framework states, the entire arts area are covered by one document--Visual and Performing Arts.

Once the data has been gathered by the committee (usually sub-committees assigned to each curriculum area) a plan is developed. The plan has several parts--an assessment summary which indicates what is being done, a needs summary to show what is desired, and a solution statement to list strategies and/or activities.

Excerpted from the Visual and Performing Arts portion of the
Country Club School SIP Plan

ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Classroom teacher, according to discretion and interest, provide dramatic and performing experiences for children K-6.

NEEDS SUMMARY

Students will be provided opportunities for dramatic instruction and performance including dramatic reading, readers' theatre, poetry, and stage production according to the interests and abilities of the teacher.

ACTIVITIES/APPROACHES/STRATEGIES
SOLUTION PROCEDURES

- a) Choral reading, dramatic play, classroom skits, classroom plays in the primary grades will provide a broad based background;
- b) Speech, dramatic poetry and plays will continue in grades 4-6;
- c) Appreciation will be fostered through assemblies (i.e. Young Audiences, Field trips to metropolitan area performances).¹²

A plan is then adopted and a budget is developed based on the level of funding by the state each year. Monies are then allocated for the various components. On page 40 is a copy of the 1988-1989 School Improvement Budget for Country Club Elementary School in San Ramon as adopted by its School Improvement Program Site Council at its meeting in April of 1989.

April 1, 1989

COUNTRY CLUB SIP BUDGET
SIP BUDGET 1988-89

	<u>BUDGETED</u>	<u>EXPENDED</u>	<u>BALANCE</u>
Instructional Aides	\$25,000	\$15,327	\$ 9,673
Employee Benefits	600	546	54
Teacher Substitutes	2,000	1,073	927
Other Books	1,000	129	871
Instructional Supplies	9,000	5,504	3,496
Consultants	2,000	898	1,102
Contracts	1,000	195	805
Field Trips	2,000	-0-	2,000
Conferences	949	533	416
Equipment	7,500	-0-	7,000
Total	\$51,049	\$24,205	\$26,844

Income	\$42,474
Carryover	9,024
	<u>\$51,586</u>

HN:fls
sipbdg.cc

Although it is not obvious by looking at the budget alone, funds are allocated to the performing arts in this sample. These come in three categories:

Consultants This category provides funding for professionals to come to the school and present programs during the school day.

Contracts This category, although mainly for Inservice Training, can provide additional funds for assemblies

Field Trips This category allows some funding for classes to attend concerts away from the school. This is used at the teachers' discretion with the approval of the principal of the school.

Use of funds

It is through SIP monies that many performances of outside professional groups are brought to the schools. One such organization that provides performances in all areas of performing arts is Young Audiences, an organization that hires professionals at professional salaries (in accordance with the various unions that represent the performers) to present and promote the performing arts in the schools of the San Francisco Bay Area. Many schools have contracted with the Young Audience organization for performances in music, dance, and theatre.

Very often the Young Audiences Organization will send summaries of the performance prior to the actual showing in order that teachers may prepare the students properly. By doing this, classroom teachers may spur the students into critical thinking and critiquing. Discussions before and after performances are important to the overall educational value of the performances.

These discussions allow teachers to share their own knowledge of the subject and provide a forum for students to ask questions, give opinions, or compare various performances.

Since one of the components of the theatre/drama section of the Visual and Performing Arts Framework is "Aesthetic Valuing," the participation of students as

audience and critic fall into line with the state goals.

That is:

[To be able to] ...develop a system of aesthetic valuing of drama/theatre.

Objectives: The student will be able to:

1. Evaluate informal playmaking.
2. Evaluate theatrical productions, films, and television plays.
3. Formulate and use criteria for judging theatre aesthetically.¹⁴

Typically, Country Club School has attempted throughout the years to have performances that cover each of the performing arts--music, (instrumental as well as vocal), dance, and drama, thus providing at least four performances a year by Young Audiences or similar professional groups. These performances vary from about two hundred to four hundred dollars per set of two regular school time assemblies depending on the number of performers.

In addition, music, choral, and drama students from the intermediate and high schools provide performances during the regular school hours. These performances are provided free of charge to the school and are set up by the performing schools with the permission of the elementary school administration and faculty.

A series of lists showing performances appears on the next page. It will show the scope of performances in the music, theatre, and dance areas of the arts.

PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMS

for
1986-1987

Young Audiences	"Follow That Rabbit"	Puppetwork	11/19/86
Young Audiences	"Kadeka Dance for Kids"	Dance program	1/18/87
Children's Theatre	Workshop of Pleasanton		
	"Step on a Crack"	Drama	2/19/87
Young Audiences	"Gary Lapow Sings"	Music	3/12/87
School Production	"Huck Finn's Summer Adventure"		
		Musical	3/20/87
Young Audiences	"Make a Circus"		4/23/87

PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMS

for
1987-1988

School Production	"Casey at the Bat"	Choral Reading with Pantomime	10/15/87
Young Audiences	"Gary Lapow Sings"	Music	12/ 9/87
Inter-school concert		Music	12/16/87
Young Audiences	"Dance Art Company"	Dance	1/20/88
School Production	"Oliver"	Musical	3/23/88
Northern California Juggling Institute		Juggling	4/15/88
School Performance	"Spring Concert"	Music	5/10/88

PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMS

for
1988-1989

Young Audiences	"Vaudeville Nouveau"	Various acts	11/89
Young Audiences	"Early Morning Brass"	Music	1/89
School Production	"Ransom of Red Chief"	Musical	3/89
Young Audiences	"A Cappellers"	Music	4/89
Young Audiences	"Banana Slug Strings"	Music	5/89

(Note: Unfortunately, records of performances by other schools, i.e., Pine Valley Intermediate and California High, were not kept as there was no fee involved. There were, however, several performances by both schools and others as well.)

In providing these programs, the teachers and administration of Country Club School were attempting to present a variety of performances in music, theatre, and dance. The teachers and administration felt that providing performances (as listed above) would help students become

aware of the performing arts both as consumers and participants.

Each of the Young Audiences performances provides not only a performance but an actual lesson in the subject of music, drama, or dance. Students are asked to participate during the instruction portion of the program.

The students observed by this writer have participated in these assembly/lessons with enthusiasm. This has been observed with programs of all three performing arts disciplines: music, drama, and dance. Discussions in the classroom by and with students has also shown the depth of their understanding of the Young Audiences presentations.

Typically, each performance covers the four strands designated in the framework (see Chapter One, page 2). While there is no attempt to make a statistical evaluation of the various YA programs, teacher observation is an acceptable evaluative tool according to the framework.

Throughout this chapter, nothing has been mentioned about the district budget for theatre in the elementary school. There is no specific category for this type of expenditure. Further, the district has, historically, made no attempt to address this curriculum area in its budget.

As of this writing, none of the administration has indicated whether the district will, at some future date, expend funds at least for in-servicing teachers if and when the administration forms a Visual and Performing Arts Task

Force. In addition, no indication has been given that funds will be provided for theatre in the elementary school when rehearsals are held beyond the regular school day as is done in the secondary schools of the district.

One can only speculate as to why the district has not chosen to provide monetary backing to the performing arts in elementary school. A reduction in state tax dollars for education following the passage of Proposition 13 has often been cited as a reason.

As indicated in Chapter One, the music portion of the visual and performing arts does receive funding in the way of instrumental and vocal teachers--depending upon the needs of the individual school. The classroom teachers, themselves are expected to cover the visual arts program (there is an adopted curriculum guide).

Monies can be, and have been in the past, provided for professional performances from the instructional materials portion of the district/school budget. But it becomes obvious that schools participating in the School Improvement Program have a decided edge where allocation of time and funds are concerned. Through the SIP plan, schools can choose to provide for theatre, or for any specific need, above and beyond the regular school's budget. It is through the SIP budget that Country Club School (in the example on page 42) has chosen to do just that.

Chapter Six

Conclusions

Restating the questions

The questions this paper has been attempting to answer can be restated here in a more concise language: Has the theatre/drama portion of the Visual and Performing Arts Framework been interpreted by the San Ramon Valley Unified School District Board of Education, its administrators, and teachers with respect to district wide implementation and allocations, and has it been a useful tool in the development of teaching strategies in the area of theatre/drama in the elementary school?

The interviews and questionnaire provided data from which the formulation of a statement, or rather, a series of statements that can be made and will show the level to which the framework has been used.

What is being done

There seems to be a confusion in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District theatre/drama with respect to theatre/drama being an integral part of the education of elementary students. This has been shown through the discussion of interviews with district administrators (chapter 2) and the results of the questionnaire (chapters 3

and 4). But how this is to be accomplished has not yet been fully addressed by the district administration or board of education.

As indicated earlier in this paper, the San Ramon Valley Unified School District had made plans to develop curriculum on a cycle that coincides with the state curriculum matrix. The fall of 1989, then, would be the year that the district was to install a visual and performing arts task force to develop a district wide curriculum guide.

As of this writing, only an informal committee has been put together under the direction of Art Dougherty, who, as part of his early retirement plan has chosen to participate in this capacity. The committee has met once. There does not, however, seem to be any real support for this committee by either the superintendent or the board of education. In a recent discussion with Mr. Dougherty, it was learned that the administration is claiming that there is not enough money to do a thorough job of supporting and developing a visual and performing arts curriculum.

This is the real history of support of visual and performing arts--especially the theatre/drama portion of it--in the elementary school throughout the history of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. Evidence has shown (see earlier discussions and history) that the district has only talked about the need for a curriculum.

There has never been a fully adopted guide and no one seems to be willing to answer the question, "Why?" except to say that there is no money.

There are a number of other possible answers to this question, however. These, too, have to do with the allocation of funds. Priorities for the expenditure of monies for curriculum development have been set by the board of education. The priority has been for language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. And when money is tight, the board's first choice for cutting has been performing arts; i.e. music. The arts, historically, have been given second class treatment in the elementary schools, especially since the passage of Proposition 13--the Jarvis/Gann Tax Initiative.

This writer has found, through informal conversations with many teachers, that they, too, consider at least theatre/drama a less than necessary part of the curriculum. Time, lack of knowledge and/or skill, and lack of funding is also part of their reasons for not including theatre/drama in their own classrooms. When grants or other allocations of money are available, the first choice of these same teachers is to place these funds into areas in which they feel most comfortable teaching.

This is a very unfortunate decision on the part of the board of education, district administration, and teachers since a fully implemented visual and performing arts

curriculum is the goal of the California State Department of Education according to Miguel Muto (see Chapter one).

During conversations with district administration, it was indicated, and the survey confirms, that interested teachers do teach some theatre arts. Whenever a student is asked to "play a part" in front of others, "theatre" is happening. This role may be within a scripted play, either professionally or child written, or classroom skit. These productions need not be elaborate, need not have special lighting, sets, or props, or need not have extensive rehearsals. But they are theatre just the same. They meet the definition of theatre; "a viewing place," a public performance of a drama, a performance in which an actor or actors take on roles--represent, for a time, someone else, and a performance that is repeatable.¹⁵

The School Improvement Program's Role

One unexpected discovery was the role of the frameworks in the funding of the School Improvement Program (SIP). In Chapter Five, a description of the SIP system was given. Along with this was an example of the visual and performing arts program. Since every elementary school in the district is part of SIP as of the 1988-1989 school year, and since the visual and performing arts components are mandated by the state, many school staffs, without realizing it, have, in fact, been conforming to the principles of the framework

to develop programs, distribute funds, and allocate time for this curriculum area.

One of the functions of SIP and the committees that develop plans, is to create a time line for implementation of the specific curriculum areas of the SIP plan that will be reviewed by the state through individual county consortiums.

Every three years a school comes under such a review. The staff, at such time, does a school wide self-study in preparation for the review. The staff also chooses three areas of the total SIP plan to be reviewed. If it so desires, the staff can include portions of the Visual and Performing Arts Framework as part of this review process.

The review team evaluates the program and the plan for improvement and jointly, with the staff, develops a summary and a timeline for implementation. The state frameworks are used both for initial development of a plan and as a standard by which the plan is subsequently reviewed.

What comes next

What needs to be done, however, is to help teachers and administrators become more aware of the framework and its implications in the total educational scheme. An understanding of the framework should help educators more easily focus on the actual activities within the classroom

and enable them to see which of these activities are or can be related to "theatre" and why.

It is not necessary, or even desirable, to have a separate subject in the elementary school labeled theatre or drama as that would further stress an already full schedule (see pg.9). The framework indicates that the visual and performing arts be taught not only as a subject discipline but also be integrated into the rest of the curriculum. This integration comes when the visual and performing arts are used in connection with the other curriculum areas. It may include an historical play which is performed by a class in relation to a social studies unit, a discussion of theatre as a vehicle by playwrights to present various types of literature, or any of many other possibilities. Curriculum review committees and the School Improvement Program can and should accomplish this task.

Placing itself on track with the state's review of curriculum will allow the San Ramon Valley Unified School District to continually look at new ways of implementing the frameworks. In this manner, when frameworks are revised, the administration can know that their teachers, who are major contributors to the review process, will become knowledgeable about new ideas and techniques.

The California Department of Education has just completed a new visual and performing arts framework which will be published later in 1989. With the adoption and

publishing of this new framework begins the cycle of curriculum review committees to develop guides for the district. As has been seen, the schools participating in the School Improvement Program are, in fact, interpreting the Visual and Performing Arts Framework and using it to develop curriculum and allocation of time and funds.

The San Ramon Valley Unified School District has indicated, through its administrative leadership, its desire to follow the state's timeline (see pages 16 and 18) and, as a district, interpret the framework with the goal of developing a curriculum guide and a means of allocating time and funds in the area of visual and performing arts. This, of course, will include the theatre/drama portion and will give teachers, who otherwise would not be including theatre/drama in their classrooms, strategies for teaching this important part of the visual and performing arts disciplines.

The Theatre/Drama portion of the Visual and Performing Arts Framework has been, albeit sometimes unconsciously, an effective tool in the development of curriculum and teaching strategies for the elementary schools participating in the School Improvement Program over the past number of years. As can be seen by the examples for Country Club Elementary School (see Chapter Five) the SIP process does, indeed, cover the main objectives of the Visual and Performing Arts Framework. Further, if the district's goals of creating a

task force are met, the framework should become an effective tool for the development of district curriculum guidelines.

Notes

¹Visual and Performing Arts Framework Committee.
Visual and Performing Arts Framework. pg. 37

²Ibid. pg. 38

³Ragusano. Telephone interview. December 1989.

⁴Briefing Papers. pg 4

⁵I started teaching in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District in September, 1965. I served on the Music Curriculum Committee as I taught music from 1965 to 1974. I have been teaching in a self-contained fifth, sixth, or combination fifth/sixth classroom from 1974 through the present. During the past ten years I have included theatre education as part of the classroom curriculum. In September of 1988 I was appointed to the School Improvement Program Committee at Country Club Elementary School. After completing a two day course given by the Contra Costa County Consortium for SIP, I was qualified to participate on a review team to review schools participating in SIP.

⁶Ragusano, "History of Arts Education in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District from 1965 to the Present".
Appendix.

⁷Art Dougherty retired several years ago. Barbara Johnson, who is a music teacher at Pine Valley Intermediate School has taken over the job of coordinating the music program for the district. There is no single person at this time who coordinates the entire visual and performing arts programs.

⁸Instrumental music is taught in all elementary schools by a music specialist who sees students at least twice per week for at least 30 minutes each lesson. It includes small, like instrument groups as well as full ensemble (band and orchestra) instruction.

⁹State Department of Education

Part of a set of materials sent to schools districts throughout the State of California, the purpose of which is to help districts prepare curriculum and textbook review committees and procedures.

¹⁰Visual and Performing Arts Framework. pg. 37

¹¹Give Them Roots and Wings. pg. 6

¹²Excerpted from the Visual and Performing Arts section of the the School Improvement Program plan of Country Club Elementary School. This was adopted in May of 1988 by the faculty and staff and well as the SIP Committee. From this, specific monies are allocated to carry out the program.

¹³From the minutes of the Country Club School School Improvement Program Committee of April 20, 1989.

¹⁴Visual and Performing Arts Framework. pg. 40

¹⁵Compiled from notes from a lecture by Dr. Karl Toepfer--San Jose State University (Theatre Department), January 27, 1986.

¹⁶State Department of Education -- School Improvement Program. This is excerpted from the guidelines given to each SIP school to assist the faculty, staff and SIP committee in each to plan their own SIP plan.

Appendix I

The visual and performing arts criterion focuses on the effect of the visual and performing arts program on students. Completeness of content, identification of skills and concepts to be learned, the range and depth of the content, and the way in which the instruction received by the students enable them to acquire skills and knowledge in the visual and performing arts.

In applying this criterion, consider all students, including limited-English-proficient students, educationally disadvantaged students, those students achieving as a level significantly below their peers, gifted and talented students, and students receiving special education instruction and services.

Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through grade six, students engage in art experiences which teach them how to enjoy and value major works of art and how to express themselves through their own art activities, which include both the visual and performing arts. These experiences progress from perception and creative expression toward complex and high level conceptual development as students are able to relate the arts to personal experience. The art experiences, which range from frequent short projects to activities sustained over a long period of time, enable students to develop creative capacities, auditory and interpretive skills, and awareness of movement and sound. Teachers structure time for students to apply creativity and originality in activities that help them develop visual images, communicate ideas, and express individual thoughts and feelings.

Performing arts activities include drama, dance, and music. Activities in drama focus on elements, actions, and characterizations. They provide a vehicle for student expression. Students develop improvisations and plays, view theatrical events, express characterization of simple situations, and convey emotional qualities through speech and formal acting techniques. Students develop their intuition about movement as an expression through dance. Music experiences are continuous throughout the grades and enable the students to develop an appreciation of a wide variety of music. Students are knowledgeable about music.

Students study, understand, and appreciate the visual and performing arts traditions of their own and other cultures. They learn to evaluate the aesthetic, moral, cultural, and historical content of art and to relate these elements to the work of various artists. Students demonstrate knowledge of historical and cultural development through different forms of artistic expression and make cultural and historical connections, including analyzing symbols, myths, metaphors, and style. Fine arts are part of the reading and literature, history, social science, math, science, and language arts curricula.

The principal and staff members support the visual and performing arts program as an integral part of the students' education. Guidance and encouragement from staff result in regular student participation in music, drama, dance, and visual arts programs. They encourage serious and promising students to pursue their demonstrated interest in the visual and performing arts. Students are exposed to examples of high quality art, and practicing artists are brought into the school program on a regular basis. Community resources, including local exhibits and museums, are used to extend learning beyond the classroom. Students' artwork is displayed throughout the school and is used to enhance the overall appearance of the school.

- ° Time is specifically allocated to instruction in the visual and performing arts.
- ° Students have early and regular access to diversified art experiences, beginning with creative expression and moving toward more complex and higher level conceptual development.
- ° Fine arts experiences range from short activities to projects sustained over a long period of time. These experiences include:
 - Art history
 - Art appreciation
 - Production
- ° During instructional art time, students use a variety of media to:
 - Express their individual ideas, thoughts, and feelings in simple media.
 - develop visual and tactile perception.
 - Master technical skills of creative expression.
 - Communicate their ideas and feelings through graphic symbols, using balance and contrast.

- Demonstrate their abilities to apply design elements and principles.
- o Students develop dramatic abilities and understandings through improvisation and plays, including:
 - Dramatizing literary selections
 - viewing theatrical events emphasizing player-audience relationships and audience etiquette
 - Expressing characterization of simple situations
 - Conveying emotional qualities through speech and formal acting techniques
- o Dance experiences are provided to students as a significant mode of expression and include:
 - Kinesthetic experience of movement
 - response to sensory stimuli
 - Motor efficiency and control
- o Musical activities include:
 - Learning to use simple musical instruments, including the human voice
 - Singing and/or playing a musical instrument before a group
 - Listening to, interpreting, and critiquing vocal and instrumental music
 - Learning the history and mechanics of music
 - Presenting musical productions
- o Visual and performing arts opportunities are integrated into other areas of the curriculum, including reading and literature, history, social science, math, science, and English language arts.
- o The principal and staff members perceive fine arts as central to the students' education.
- o Serious and promising students are encouraged to pursue their demonstrated interests in the visual and performing arts, including activities that encourage students to:
 - Participate in the instrumental program and select a musical instrument according to their growth level.
 - Work with artists in residence or other appropriate modes.

- Utilize community resources, including local arts exhibits that extend artistic learning beyond the classroom.

o Student artwork appears throughout the school and is used to enhance the overall appearance of the school setting.

Appendix II

Nick Ragusano
c/o Country Club School
7534 Blue Fox Way
San Ramon, CA 94583
828-4284

September 2, 1988

Dear Teachers,

I am working on my thesis for an MA in theatre from San Jose State University. The focus of my thesis is educational theatre--specifically in the elementary school --grades K-6.

I have received permission to send a questionnaire to all teachers in the study schools. These questions have to do with your own program in your own classroom.

For the purpose of this questionnaire, the term "Theatre Arts" includes skits, plays, readers' theatre, and theatre games whose goal is drama related (not social development i.e. role playing for values clarification etc.).

Please complete the questionnaire by Friday, September 16, 1988. Use the Scan-Tron answer sheet to respond to the question. Send the questions and Scan-Tron sheet to:

Nick Ragusano
Country Club School

Although it is not necessary, it would be helpful if you included your name and school on the Scan-Tron sheet.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Nicholas A. Ragusano, Jr.

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