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An Investigation of the relationship between narrative dance and language arts skills

Donna M. Morse
San Jose State University

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**An investigation of the relationship between narrative dance and
language arts skills**

Morse, Donna M., M.A.

San Jose State University, 1992

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
NARRATIVE DANCE AND LANGUAGE ARTS SKILLS

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Theatre Arts
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
Donna M. Morse
August, 1992

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS

Dr. Karl Toepfer

Mina Garman, M.A.

Janet Van Swoll, M.A.

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

An Investigation of the Relationship between Narrative Dance and Language Arts Skills

by Donna M. Morse

This thesis considers the relationship between narrative dance and the language arts skills of third grade children. It defines narrative dance and its function in dance history, as well as defining and exploring the four language arts skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. A model narrative dance curriculum is included, as is an evaluation of the necessary elements for the testing of such a model.

Research in this area reveals that though there are many sources which discuss children's dance, there are no sources which discuss the relationship between narrative dance and language arts. Research also revealed that year-long standardized testing in language arts skills is not present in California. The model addresses both these areas and presents a narrative dance curriculum which may be used to test the potential impact of narrative dance on language arts skills, or simply as a set of classroom activities.

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Immeasurable thanks are offered to the late Juan Valenzuela without whose guidance and support I would have headed both this project, and perhaps an entire career, in a very different direction.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The intent of this thesis is to explore the possible applications of Narrative Dance to the development of childrens' language arts skills and to construct a theoretical model with which one can determine how dance impacts these skills. To fulfill this intent, the thesis will define and examine the narrative dance form as well as plot and analyze the current efforts in the development of language arts skills -- listening, speaking, reading and writing -- before developing a model for further study and application. This first chapter will introduce Narrative Dance and the sources of material necessary to the construction of a theoretical model, explain the methodology and limitations of that model, and detail the topics to be covered in future chapters.

Modern dance choreographers have often used the narrative form of movement to tell a particular story to a viewing audience. Many of Martha Graham's pieces, such as Clytemnestra (1958), Night Journey (1947), and Cave of the Heart (1946), serve as examples of modern dance movement used to tell a story. Often this type of narrative dance tells a simple story in a linear fashion, but it can also accommodate the juxtaposing of fantasies, memories, nightmares and present events. Graham has occasionally taken advantage of this narrative capability by focusing on a single character and revealing through

movement the many interacting and often conflicting images and emotions within that character's psyche.¹ Narrative dances must include characters and events which occur for particular reasons. Many dances, such as George Balanchine's Apollo (1957), are choreographed around one or more characters. In Apollo, Balanchine explores the characters of Apollo and the Muses while not relating a particular story or sequence of events. The characters are portrayed in movement, but there is no developed plot line. Descriptions of these dances, and of the movement used, is available in dance books such as The Complete Guide to Modern Dance by Don McDonagh.

Dance education pioneers long ago extolled the value of dance when included as a part of the educational process. These statements have recognized that dance contributes to emotional well-being and physical communication, and even to the development of personality. Ruth Murray writes, "The greatest value of dance in the education of children comes to them from the experience of making their own forms to express, to communicate, to enjoy."² Noted dance educator Alma Hawkins states, "Creativity and the development of creative faculties is a critical part of human development. Dance experiences foster these opportunities for self-directed activities in creative development."³ These opinions are widely held and supported by the dance and non-dance communities of educators and philosophers.

It is already assumed in this research that the reader acknowledges the value of dance in elementary curriculum, beyond simple physical exercise. Within this research, therefore, there will be no intent to prove that dance as an art form has value in elementary curriculum. Instead, the focus of this study will be to present the possibilities for the use of dance specifically as support for

language arts in the elementary school. In doing so, this study must in no way imply that dance must only serve as "support"; dance can and has been taught in the schools solely for its own merit.

Further, only that aspect of dance described as the "narrative form" will be considered in this study for its potential applications in curriculum. This narrative form is known by some as "a story or dramatic dance."⁴ Because of their similar theoretical approaches, when appropriate and for clarification, correlations will be made between research in creative drama and this study of the narrative dance form.

The language skills which are of concern in this study are those of listening, speaking, reading and writing which are the basic skills involved in language learning in elementary school. The English-Language Arts Model Curriculum Guide and the English-Language Arts Framework, both produced by the California State Department of Education in 1987, present philosophical and practical educational information in the area of language skills.

Because the purpose of this study is to investigate the potential application of dance in its narrative form to the learning of language arts skills in children, the study will examine both the activities of watching and doing narrative dance movement. The model for narrative dance curriculum presented in the appendix will include exercises and theory which discuss both watching narrative dance as performed by others and participating in narrative dance. This model can be used to measure and test the potential effects of narrative dance on language arts skill development. After working through the activities with the children, all of the children can be post-tested in the four language arts skills. The results will enable the experimenter to draw conclusions as to the

effect of using the dance curriculum. This research will examine the contribution of these types of dance experiences in support of the child's language skills development, and will develop a model for a dance curriculum.

This study contributes to the current body of dance literature by focusing on the narrative form of dance in the elementary educational setting. Both theoretical literature and practical dance texts seem to overlook the possibility of using the narrative dance form to assist in the development of language arts skills. The reason for this oversight is unclear but it can be speculated that the absence of such material grows out of the problem that dancers and educators have long struggled to get dance accepted in the curriculum. Since Margaret H'Doubler instituted the first dance program in higher education in 1917, other educators have strived to support the inclusion of dance at all levels (elementary, secondary and university). This effort has been so consuming that educators have only, it seems, been able to focus on getting dance included as an art form. Dance has gained greater acceptance in the education field since H'Doubler in 1917 and is now becoming more and more valued as an art form. As this occurs educators can begin to explore the other potentials for dance in curriculum. Narrative dance and its possible connection to language arts skill development is one of these areas. In those places where educators still doubt the value of dance as an art form, dance may be able to gain wider acceptance and credibility by demonstrating its support for subjects such as language arts.

Research, however, has detailed a connection between dance and poetry/creative writing skills. Joyce Boorman in Dance and Language Experiences with Children details her experiences with students who participate in dance lessons and then take time for creative writing about the

dance activity.⁵ James H. Humphrey has supported the use of dance to increase reading comprehension in his book Child Development and Learning Through Dance. Humphrey describes this type of dance which supports learning in other curriculum areas as "cognitive dance."⁶ While Humphrey's exercises and theories are concerned with the reading comprehension of stories, he does not, however, address the use of the narrative dance form. Both Boorman and Humphrey have considered some of the applications of dance as a learning medium in other subject areas, most specifically language arts. Neither, however, addresses the use of the narrative dance form or names any other research which uses the narrative dance form to enhance development in language arts skills. This absence of information on the use of narrative dance and language arts has two possible reasons. Though there has been improvement in recent years, dancers have been seriously lacking in writing and publishing material on their art. Much of the philosophical and theoretical support which is present for drama and other art forms has not been published for dance. Secondly, the concept of using narrative dance to assist language arts skills could have been explored in the past. However, until such research is documented it cannot serve the development of dance and its presence in curriculum.

This study will be limited to research regarding the narrative dance form. Although many other styles of movement exist, and are acknowledged as making valuable contributions to the genre of dance, they will not be considered for the purpose of this research. This study will also be limited to research pertaining to children in the elementary levels. Previous investigations of children's learning offer no correlations between watching or doing narrative

dance movement and the development of language arts skills. No previous research has specifically addressed the topic of this study, and there is no documentation on the effects of using narrative dance to assist language arts skills development.

A working bibliography has indicated that there will be a sufficient number of sources of information about the development of language arts skills as well as children's dance education. In the area of language arts skills, the primary sources will be the publications of the California State Department of Education, and language arts texts for teachers. These State publications have serious limitations and present real difficulties in this type of research. The Model Curriculum Guide and the English-Language Arts Framework are written very broadly. Because the Department of Education produces these materials to be used in school districts throughout the state, the guidelines, concepts and activities included must be adaptable to an almost infinite range of student types and abilities. Consequently the publications give no definitive answers on what subject matter should be taught or what level of achievement is acceptable in various grades. This lack of specificity makes the evaluation of language arts skills a difficult process within this research. To aid in this area, reference will be made to some of the testing materials currently in use in third grade classrooms in the state. (These testing materials are not provided by the State, but rather are secured and employed by each school district to evaluate the progress of its students.)

The materials produced by the State of California and the dance texts noted herein are not in any way the only, or necessarily the best, publications on this topic. The state texts are unacceptably vague and provide guidelines for

achievement rather than criteria for student skill evaluation. The state texts have been chosen as the primary support for this research for two reasons. Firstly, they are the publications by which California public schools operate. They are the foundation for the public school system. It is also likely that the thesis' model will be tested in the state of California, under these guidelines. Secondly, the texts have been chosen in part to demonstrate their weaknesses. Through the presentation of various aspects of the texts within this thesis, the weaknesses will become apparent. There may be publications from other states which more effectively address the language arts curriculum areas. However, for the reasons above, they are not included in this thesis.

Although all of the dance authors noted in this research (Boorman, Humphrey, Stinson and Joyce) have done work supporting the inclusion of some type of dance in curriculum, only Joyce's work begins to address the use of narrative dance in this area. Boorman's only connection between language arts and dance is when her students write about the dance they have done. Humphrey deals with reading comprehension, an important language arts skill, but uses creative movement, not narrative dance. Stinson works with stories and poems, but asks the students to copy a demonstrator rather than create original movement. The texts of Boorman, Humphrey and Stinson are valuable in their own right, but are insufficient sources in the area of narrative dance and language arts skills. Joyce's text addresses connections between narrative dance and language arts skills. An example from her text is presented in Chapter 2 along with selections from Humphrey and Stinson.

Much of the material presented in this thesis will be derived from library research of current material available in the areas of dance and of language

arts. Dance theory materials which discuss the narrative dance form and examples thereof are relevant sources, as are texts which include theories and lesson plans for dance in the elementary classroom. Texts, such as Boorman's and Humphrey's, which document prior use of dance in language arts curriculum and materials which present and explain the development of language arts skills in elementary school children will also be used. Finally, materials written for language arts teachers dealing with guidelines for student achievement relative to grade level/age (such as the State of California materials) will be used. The State of California frameworks and model curriculum guides will figure prominently in this thesis.

The model for a narrative dance curriculum in language arts presented in the appendix will not be field tested as a part of this thesis. Before such a model can be tested effectively, many areas must be clarified. The complexities of dealing with the conditions of the initial experiment are tackled in this thesis and this theoretical support lays the groundwork for the eventual testing of the model. Elementary teachers are not expected to perform the lessons in this model for testing purposes. The model is intended as a study to determine whether dance can be an effective tool in the language arts curriculum. Though teachers are invited to use the lessons in the model in the classroom, the model should be field tested by an independent specialist.

Several terms which are critical to this research must first clearly be defined in order to establish a common ground of comprehension. More elaborate and specific definitions, as well as definitions of additional terms, will follow in appropriate chapters.

Narrative Dance Form: ". . . sometimes known as a story or dramatic dance . . . sometimes tells a simple story, but it can also communicate a tale of psychological relationships . . . a consistent thread or purpose runs through the entire work."⁷ The Narrative Dance form refers to the use of the body with music to communicate a particular story. The body must be used as the instrument of communication for the work to be considered a Narrative Dance.

Story: A description of a series of events, true or fictional. The events described must be related by reason or logic. A disconnected, non-specific ordering or selection of events cannot be considered a story.

Language Arts Skills: "Language arts describes a major portion of the elementary curriculum which includes the communication processes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing."⁸ (Listening, speaking, reading and writing will be individually defined in Chapter 3.)

This investigation of the narrative dance form and its application in the development of language arts skills in children will be divided into four further chapters.

Chapter 2 will focus on the narrative dance form. This will include a definition, examples in existing choreography, an explanation of the similarities and differences between the effects of watching and/or doing movement in narrative form, and examples in creating narrative dance experiences for children and the benefits of those experiences.

Chapter 3 will focus on the language arts skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. This chapter will include a definition of each of the

language arts skills as well as a discussion of the methods currently employed to develop these skills.

Chapter 4 will address specific questions related to the model presented in the appendix. This chapter will include information which explains and supports the selection of the various dances and activities used in the model.

Chapter 5 will summarize the material in the previous chapters while drawing conclusions regarding details and difficulties of this study. This final chapter will also indicate further avenues of study in this area, based on the results of this investigation.

A model of suggestions for the teaching of creative movements to assist in the development of language arts skills will be presented in the appendix. This model will outline lesson plans divided into four clearly delineated and defined stages: pre-dance language arts activities; narrative dance activities; follow-up language arts activities; and commentaries.

Notes

¹ Don McDonagh, The Complete Guide to Modern Dance (New York: Doubleday, 1976).

² Ruth Lovell Murray, Dance in Elementary Education (New York: Harper, 1953), 25.

³ Alma M. Hawkins, Creating Through Dance (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 28.

⁴ Sandra Cerny Minton, Choreography: A Basic Approach Using Improvisation (Illinois: Human Kinetics Publishers, 1986), 8-9.

⁵ Joyce Boorman, Dance and Language Experiences with Children (Ontario: Longman Canada Limited, 1973).

⁶ James H. Humphrey, Child Development and Learning Through Dance (New York: AMS, 1987), 56.

⁷ Minton 9.

⁸ Paul S. Anderson and Diane Lapp, Language Skills in Elementary Education (New York: Macmillan, 1988), 39.

CHAPTER 2

An Exploration of Narrative Dance

Narrative dances are those dances which use movement to tell a particular story. These dances can be constructed in any style, ballet, modern dance, or jazz. However, for the purposes of this investigation, there will be a brief discussion of the historical origins of narrative movement, as well as an example of a more complex narrative modern dance. It is first necessary, however, to define the term "narrative dance" and its implication in this research.

Several authors have undertaken a definition of narrative dance for the purpose of including it in a listing of choreographic styles. Though each describes the word "narrative" slightly differently, there is some agreement on the final presentation of a narrative work. Chrystelle Trump Bond, writing in the Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, says that the narrative form "takes its organization from the development of characterization and dramatic plot."¹ In this definition Bond notes two characteristics which are common to each of the descriptions of narrative dance: character and plot.

In Choreography: A Basic Approach Using Improvisation, Sandra Cerny Minton states that a narrative dance "sometimes tells a simple story, but it can also communicate a tale of psychological relationships between dancers."² Minton also describes a form of dance called "dance dramas" which are "pieces

which express a message and involve relationships between the dancer-characters."³ Though Minton's definitions of dance dramas and narrative dance are not entirely refined, they both acknowledge character and plot.

Perhaps the most lucid description of narrative dance is presented in Blom and Chaplin's The Intimate Act of Choreography. Here, it is suggested that both character and plot together are the two indispensable features of narrative dance:

[Some] dances have characters but lack a plot, narrative, or sense of causality; in these the choreographer can be poet and not storyteller.⁴

In this description, Blom and Chaplin have indicated that the presence of a sense of causality or a reason for the actions is necessary for the piece to be considered a narrative dance -- a dance which tells a story. This of course requires that a story contain events which are connected by a sense of logic, or causality. (See the definition of a story found in Chapter 1.) Other dances which lack concrete plot or story line, though they may have interacting characters, are not narrative dances. From these definitions, a new definition of narrative dance can be developed. For the purposes of this investigation a narrative dance will be defined henceforth as:

a dance which describes, through movement, a set of events which have an influence on represented characters and the relationships between those characters.

To clarify the overall definition, it is now necessary to elaborate on important terms included in the definition as they pertain to narrative dance.

MOVEMENT: A means of communication in which the physical body is used to transmit visual information. More specifically, dance movement is that movement which calls attention to the body as the source of meaning and communication. Margaret H'Doubler states, "In dance, the dancer reflects through bodily tensions and disciplined movements the emotion and meaning he wishes to communicate."⁵ The choreographer abstracts human movements into gestures and physical phrases which express or emphasize ideas or emotions. The key word in this definition is "abstracts." The choreographer does not duplicate ordinary human actions. For narrative dance movement, the choreographer begins with the basic human action required by the plot, and abstracts and alters it until it becomes a less pedestrian but still eminently recognizable gesture which expresses the appropriate emotion or idea.⁶

A SET OF EVENTS: The content or the basic subject matter of the dance. It is these selected occurrences which have an affect on the characters portrayed in the dance. Many choreographers work with pre-existing stories -- Graham's depiction of Clytemnestra (1958), for example; stories can also be developed from the choreographer's original idea -- Graham's Appalachian Spring (1944), for example. In each of these instances a set of events is portrayed, and its effects on the characters illuminated. These events may or may not be portrayed in chronological order (as when Graham presents daydreams or flashbacks).

INFLUENCE: To cause a change in a certain aspect of the character. More specifically, to produce a modification of a character's original consciousness, in order to demonstrate a change in the perceptions or feelings of that character. Any such changes will have some impact on the character's future

actions. Narrative dances can also have an effect on the audience. These dances can influence changes in the consciousness of the viewer through education in a particular area or the development of artistic appreciation.

CHARACTERS: Any persons or personified ideas, real or fictional, depicted in a particular story. These characters are portrayed through movement by the dancers. Characterization develops two ways in dance. The choreographer creates and selects movements which he/she feels best represent the character's physical, emotional and psychological nature. The dancer takes this information and movement and expands it through his/her artistic talents to more fully represent the character.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHARACTERS: Any connection or association between characters which influences the progression of events and/or is influenced by this progression.

Historical Origins of Narrative Dance

With this understanding of the elements of narrative dance, it is now important to consider the historical origins of narrative dance. Further, this information will illuminate the functions dance has performed throughout history.

Since primitive times, humanity has striven for understanding of the relationships between itself and others, and itself and Nature; such understanding has evolved from the transfer of all forms of information between people. Information passed between people can have many purposes: it can recount an event; it can express a cultural tradition; and it can explain a given history or heritage. At its simplest, the information passed between people can

be the expression of singular statement or thought. Most commonly, the transfer of information has taken a verbal form. When difficulties or differences in verbal communication occur, however, humans often turn to physical movement to express ideas. When this physical movement is presented in abstract form and describes events and/or relationships between people, this non-verbal communication in some instances can be considered narrative dance as defined by this author.

Narrative dance has been present throughout history. From the ancient Greeks, who used this type of movement in their dramas, through the pageants of sixteenth and seventeenth century France, to modern times, people have always been involved in communication with others and, whether inside or outside a theatre, there has been continual historical evidence of narrative dance. This historical evidence demonstrates the importance of narrative dance as a means of communication, and while each of the instances of narrative dance is unique, there are similarities between them. The Ancient Greeks used dance as a companion to the lyric and song in their dramas, and though the movement did not precisely conform to the current definition of narrative dance, it now displays some similarity to the narrative style which developed centuries later. Many ballet choreographers from the late sixteenth century to the present have chosen to depict stories in movement, thereby creating narrative dances. These ballets have been developed from a variety of sources.

Martha Graham's Clytemnestra is exemplary of a more complex form of narrative dance. This dance, like its literary companion, consists of a prologue, two acts, and an epilogue. Graham used nine dancers to dance the roles of

Clytemnestra, Aegisthus, Iphigenia, Electra, Cassandra, Helen of Troy, Agamemnon, Orestes, Hades, Paris, the Watchman and the Ghost of Agamemnon. Additional dancers were used as a Greek-style chorus. The following is an abbreviated description of the action of the piece, as written by Don McDonagh in The Complete Guide to Modern Dance. It is presented here so that the reader can become familiar with how Graham told the story through movement, as well as how narrative dance functions in this more complex form.

In the prologue, Clytemnestra sits and ponders the events of her life. . . . The messenger of death . . . walks across the front of the stage thumping his staff. . . . to the left an elaborate chair on which a man conceals his face with branches. . . . Clytemnestra moves forward to begin her meditation . . . she drops to her knees, curves her arms in toward herself questioningly, rises, kicks her outstretched palm with her foot, and sinks to her knees again. The man with the branches before his face is the King of Hades . . . he stands with Helen of Troy, Apollo and the goddess Athena. The sight of Helen brings back the memory of the siege and sack of Troy and four couples dash on to detail the terrible events that took place. . . . their dance is a grotesque lament. . . . All watching except Hades go off, and Clytemnestra is left pressing her anguished palm to her forehead. . . . He then circles her. The memories begin to flow again. . . .

Another episode in her past swims to the fore. It is her murdered husband, Agamemnon, whom she slew in revenge for Iphigenia. She goes to conceal herself . . . as the messenger who opened the prologue walks across the back of the stage. . . . During the passionate duet the story of their life together is sung, and now a flood of memory causes all of the characters in the entwined tale to emerge. . . .

Clytemnestra enters . . . escorted by six Furies who clutch at their stomachs and then sweep their elbows in, while they circle her, in a dance of grim jubilation.

. . . the young Clytemnestra dances with Aegisthus and Paris entreats Helen of Troy . . . young Clytemnestra and Aegisthus . . . embrace tenderly but intensely while the older Clytemnestra watches this part of her past intently. . . .

Agamemnon returns in triumph. He leaps arrogantly down to put a robe about Clytemnestra, who tosses it off. He then . . . places it at the feet of his new love, Cassandra. Clytemnestra is caught in a spasm of hurt and pain . . . she falls at his feet and raises her hand, but he rudely pushes it aside. . . . She gathers herself and draws the cloak about her body and by so doing suggests a blood resolve. . . .

Agamemnon enters their home . . . and Clytemnestra enters with the fatal dagger. She . . . thrusts it into his body and . . . Aegisthus and Clytemnestra do a brief dance of exultation. He storms around brandishing a spear while she indulges and feeds his pride. The messenger returns to view the carnage and opens his mouth in a silent scream.⁷

In this piece Graham incorporates a Greek myth with themes of passion and duty and perfectly demonstrates her style of depicting a story through movement, or Narrative Dance. (Even in Don McDonagh's written description, the reader can gain some understanding of the images of the expressive choreography.) In Clytemnestra, Graham uses the same device for exposing multiple phases of the same personality that she used earlier in Seraphic Dialogue (1955). When young Clytemnestra dances downstage with her lover, the "older" Clytemnestra retires upstage to watch the duet as if it is taking place in her memory. In this way, the audience is presented simultaneously with the emotions of the young woman dancing with her lover, as well as those of the older woman as she recalls her past. By using this technique, Graham is not forced to present the story in chronological order, but can use the juxtaposition

of two different times to represent more clearly the effects of certain events on the characters' lives. Graham's choice of movements, such as the dramatic falls of Clytemnestra at the feet of Agamemnon, portray the character's anguish and propel the story forward for the audience. This written description of Clytemnestra demonstrates how bodily movement is able to construct extremely complex narratives to tell very complicated stories through dance. The fact that dance is able to portray a narrative of this complexity justifies a continuing look at dance as a narrative tool.

Application of Narrative Dance

Because this investigation deals with the application of narrative dance to the development of language arts skills in children, it is important to consider both the passive and active opportunities for this application. Passive approaches include watching a live or filmed performance of narrative dances; active approaches include the creation and performance of narrative dances by the student participants.

Watching narrative dance is perhaps the best way for children to become acquainted with the possibilities for telling stories through physical movement. In Children's Dance, published by the American Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance and written by the Association's Dance Division Task Force, one benefit of watching dance is addressed. The Task Force states, "If children have the experience in school of viewing dance . . . the beginning of the critical observation of dance movement will have been made."⁸ Sue Stinson, in Dance for Young Children, feels that the viewing of a

dance performance can add a new excitement to future movement sessions that is impossible to capture in any other way. She also states that if the performance is preceded by comments which guide the students' observation (such as, "notice in the next dance how the dancers make patterns on the floor"), this can help the students become more perceptive observers.⁹ These comments offer two possibilities for language arts skill development. First, the child is involved in listening to and comprehending the comment. Then, the comment can lead to further discussions in which students are given the opportunity to use their speaking skills to participate and share their perceptions of dance. The choice and style of comments is critical to the success of the movement exercise as well as the improvement of language arts skills. It is not only the dance, but dance with the accompanying commentary, that enhances languages arts learning.

Each of these comments, though not specifically geared to watching narrative dance, addresses the value of watching dance. There is no research which addresses the specific activity of watching narrative dance. However, two researchers from the Department of Dance at the University of Waterloo, Ontario have done a study on children as a dance audience. The Waterloo research explored techniques for evaluating children's attitudes toward dance to gain a better understanding of how children appreciate dance. Though the primary focus of the research is not directly applicable to this study, it is interesting to note the subjects' preferences among the dances they viewed. (The study is presented here because it is the only study found to address narrative dance in any way.) The children aged 10 to 15 years, were shown four dances in live performance. Two dances were described as "representative," essentially

narrative, thematic dances; the second two dances were described as "manifestative," or "mood" dances without a story. In each of the evaluation categories, children expressed a higher preference for the representative or narrative dances than for the manifestative or mood dances.¹⁰ When children enjoy an activity and express this greater preference, they are willing to participate more fully, be more attentive and can thus derive more benefit from that activity. Though enjoyment alone can not be the sole reason to use such movement in the language arts curriculum, based on the research of Priddle and Itkonen it can be asserted that because children enjoy viewing narrative dance, it is a good activity to select for language arts lesson plans. Even though research regarding watching narrative dance is essentially non-existent, from these results it can be safely concluded that children will likely enjoy the opportunity to view narrative dances.

Actively participating in narrative dance means that an individual either choreographs and/or performs narrative movement. In choreographing a dance, the student is participating in the creation and development of movement which will tell a story. In performing the movement of the dance, the student is using his or her body for the physical expression of the events and characters within the story. Dance heightens the ability of bodily movement to tell a story. Movement is simply one mode of storytelling, one mode of narrating. Dance, more than everyday human movement, clearly focuses attention on the body as the communication tool.

As was stated earlier in this chapter, when choreographing a narrative dance the choreographer can work from an existing story or create an original story. Even when working from an existing story, the choreographer may

choose to make some changes in plot or in characterization, or to highlight some element of the story while down playing another. This is known as the concept of "artistic license." For example, when depicting the story of Little Red Riding Hood, a choreographer could choose to expand the forest scene to include the presence of many different animals. When composing and selecting movement to communicate a given story, the choreographer may begin with the basic plot line, "the little girl meets the wolf in the forest," and then embellish it as he or she prefers. Characterization may become apparent by the quality of movement chosen for a particular character. The choreographer or teacher might suggest such words as slow, deliberate, and methodical to direct the dancer in creating or performing movements for the wolf. Conversely, the little girl's movement may develop from terms such as quick, carefree, and free-spirited. The choreographer may begin with the human movement appropriate to a particular activity and abstract or modify such movement for the dance. For example, rather than having the little girl swing her basket freely (as she does in the story), a choreographer can abstract and expand the swinging motif so that the entire body is involved in a swinging movement which communicates the idea of a carefree and spirited personality. The relationship between the words suggested by the teacher and the movement that the dancer develops from them is a complex one. The use of these words makes this activity clearly a narrative dance activity. The basic plot line is given and the words which direct the characterization are development upon the major theme. Despite the fact that the concept of slow or quick is relative and may change drastically from dancer to dancer, the use of cue words has brought the activity further into the realm of narrative dance.

Having discussed the differences between watching and doing narrative dance, it is now appropriate to discuss methods of creating narrative dance experiences for children. Several authors have written on the topic of story-related or story-inspired dances for and with children, but very little is available on how to create and present a lesson with the sole focus of representing characters and a set of events through movement. Mary Joyce, James Humphrey, and Sue Stinson each write about movement that is inspired by the reading of particular poems, rhymes, or stories. Each of these authors presents a rhyme or story to which children can dance. The sung rhymes described in James H. Humphrey's Child Development and Learning Through Dance require particular movements. For example, one of Humphrey's sing-a-longs is:

Oh! Around the ring we go.
 Around the ring we go.
 We stop right here.
 We clap our hands.
 And then sit down just so.¹¹

This song asks the children to do particular movements in a particular sequence. There are no characters. In this form the song would not be a suitable or complete narrative dance experience because it does not contain information about characters or events as described in the definition of narrative dance previously stated.

In First Steps in Teaching Creative Dance to Children, Mary Joyce explored another way of using stories and poetry to stimulate movement. She suggests that a story lesson begin with a discussion of the story up to the point where the children will begin to move. (Joyce feels that entire stories are too long and that students should be able to focus on a certain portion of the story

which has interesting images.) The story of Rumpelstiltskin is used as an example. Following is the condensed text of her sample lesson:

First, show me your fire. Walk around it so I can see how big it is . . . Rumpelstiltskin is a funny, little man. Show me how he would skip around his fire . . . What kind of body shape would he have? . . . He is a strange little gnome . . . Maybe his shoulders move . . . Where would his face be looking as he dances? . . . This time dance in one spot, behind your fire, using your face, your hips . . . and changing levels . . . I'll sing for you this time: Rumpelstiltskin, Rumpelstiltskin, Rumpelstiltskin, is my name. Rumpelstiltskin, Rumpelstiltskin, Rumpelstiltskin, ha, ha, ha! (I have simplified the song that Rumpelstiltskin sings in the story.)¹²

Joyce's lesson on Rumpelstiltskin continues until Rumpelstiltskin disappears forever. In this lesson with verbal cues, children are using movement to represent a character and a set of events in the story of Rumpelstiltskin. Though the text of this dance cannot be considered "narrative" because Joyce's wording does not present events related by logic, the mere fact that Joyce uses verbal cues to initiate movement makes this type of activity valuable to language arts learning. These verbal cues show the thought process involved as dancers develop characters. Again, the verbal cues bring the dance activity further into the area of narrative dance. The children are guided by Joyce to develop a Rumpelstiltskin who can dance. By using verbal suggestions, Joyce challenges the students to use their listening skills to participate, and also helps the students develop the Rumpelstiltskin character in the same way that the dancers in Graham's Clytemnestra developed their characters. The descriptive quality and action words in Joyce's verbal cues are especially valuable to language arts learning. The students hear words such as, "strange little gnome"

and the words propel them toward the selection of particular movements. In addition, the words have been introduced into the child's listening vocabulary, and may reappear in the child's spoken and/or written vocabulary because he or she has gained an understanding of the word through movement.

Joyce's approach of modifying Rumpelstiltskin's song is her only similarity to Humphrey who creates his own songs. Unlike Humphrey's sung rhymes, this story allows children to take the initiative and make their own movement choices based on what they are hearing (or have heard in the story's introduction).

Sue Stinson provides several good suggestions for choosing stories for use in dance lessons. She states that, "The children will not be 'acting out' the story, but rather exploring in movement terms many of the images present."¹³ The stories selected must have "vivid movement imagery," which means that the words must translate easily into movement. Action words such as run, float, or flutter, are easiest for students to express in movement. Descriptive words or phrases such as, "hands as gnarled as the trunk of an oak tree," are also good for stimulating movement/physical choices. These words or phrases inspire the dancer's movement interpretation or choreographic selections for developing his or her character. As the child is exposed to these words in movement activities he or she gains an understanding of the words through their physical embodiment. The words may then appear (used correctly) in the child's language. Narrative dance reinforces the power of these words in the child's vocabulary.

If the actions detailed in the story are everyday activities, Stinson feels that the teacher must find ways to expand them beyond pantomime. Her

Teaching Idea follows:

Using a Book as a Theme for a Dance Session

(Swimmy by L. Leonni)

(a) Select an idea from each page, translate it into a movement concept and develop it through exploring and then structuring it into a dance.

(b) Example from the first page:

Idea - Swimmy swam faster than his brothers and sisters.

Concept - Speed

Activities

- Perform a simple movement, such as clapping, and ask the children to perform the same movement faster, then slower.
- Repeat with other movements.

(c) Example from the second page:

Idea - Darting through the waves

Concept - Darting

Activities

- Demonstrate a darting movement with a chosen body part
- Explore darting movement with body parts and the whole body.
- Dance Structure: Dart one part, then another part; then, dart the whole body through space and freeze. Repeat several times.¹⁴

Stinson encourages movement in a different way from both Joyce and Humphrey. Unlike Humphrey, she does not create a song which requires particular movements. Unlike Joyce, Stinson demonstrates an action which she has selected from the story and then guides students to do similar actions based upon what they have seen in the example. Joyce allows the students to develop and choose their own movements based upon both what they respond to in the text and her verbal suggestions.

The aforementioned theories are representative of the limited material available on creating narrative dance experiences for children. Some of them, like Humphrey, do not approach narrative dance at all -- but stay within the confines of movement in the "I'm a little teapot . . ." variety. Others, like Joyce, present material in a way which encourages movement exploration and accepts each child's individual interpretation. None discuss the ability of a child to function as creator/choreographer or to express physically a more complex story as a performer.

In Chapter 2 the term "narrative dance" and its implication in this research have been defined. Through a description and explanation of Martha Graham's Clytemnestra, this chapter has explained how dance has functioned as a means for narrative communication throughout history and how dancers use their technique and creativity to portray the characters in a narrative dance. The portrayal of a narrative as complex as Clytemnestra demonstrates the ability of dance to successfully function in the narrative area. The dancer's means of characterization works in combined effort with that of the choreographer to produce developed and defined characters who are connected through a series of logically related events. These characters must be related by some logic or causality in the narrative dance.

Also in this chapter the work of three prominent authors, Mary Joyce, James Humphrey and Sue Stinson, have been examined for contributions to this connection between dance and language arts. Joyce's style of teaching which uses verbal cues to encourage creative, and sometimes narrative, movement, is in itself fostering language arts skills development. Her lessons

require students to listen and occasionally speak as well as dance. This type of lesson could very well lead to more specifically narrative activities. The use of verbal cues and comments which precede movement activities is as much part of the narrative activity as the dance itself. Both the verbal cues/comments and the dance activities work toward the enhancement of language arts skills.

Using the material presented in this chapter as background and support, this thesis will proceed to create a model for investigating the use of narrative dance to develop language arts skills. An explanation of these language arts skills follows in Chapter 3.

Notes

¹ Chrystelle Trump Bond, "An Aesthetic Framework for Dance," Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (Mar. 1987): 63.

² Sandra Cerny Minton, Choreography: A Basic Approach Using Improvisation (Illinois: Human Kinetics, 1986), 8.

³ Minton 104.

⁴ Lynne Anne Blom and L. Tarin Chaplin, The Intimate Act of Choreography (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1982), 133.

⁵ Margaret Newell H'Doubler, The Dance and Its Place in Education (New York: Harcourt, 1925), xxv.

⁶ Bond 64

⁷ Don McDonagh, The Complete Guide to Modern Dance (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 67-70.

⁸ Gladys Andrews Fleming, ed., Children's Dance (Reston: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 1981), 22.

⁹ Sue Stinson, Dance for Young Children (Reston: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 1988), 109.

¹⁰ Ruth E. Priddle and Ann Itkonen, "Children as a Dance Audience," in New Directions in Dance, ed. Diana Theodores Taplin (Toronto: Pergamon, 1979), 61-77.

¹¹ James H. Humphrey, Child Development and Learning Through Dance (New York: AMS, 1987), 171.

¹² Mary Joyce, First Steps in Teaching Creative Dance to Children (Palo Alto: Mayfield, 1973), XX.

¹³ Stinson 101.

14 Stinson 103.

CHAPTER 3

Understanding Language Arts Skills

This chapter will explore the language arts functions of listening, speaking, reading and writing. It will define each function and its related skills, present some skill development exercises in current practice, and outline the criteria for the evaluation of skill level. In order to proceed, however, the term "language arts" itself must first be defined.

Paul S. Anderson and Diane Lapp, in Language Skills in Elementary Education, define language arts as follows:

Language arts describes a major portion of the elementary curriculum, which includes the communication processes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.¹

These "communication processes" involve both the absorption (listening and reading) and the expression (speaking and writing) of language. Because of the inter-relationship between these processes, success within one of the skills is dependent upon progress and success in each of the other skills. Proficiency in one area facilitates the introduction to the next area, and a child's development of oral and written language usually follows this sequence: listening; speaking; reading; and, finally, writing.² The language arts curriculum in the elementary school exists to guide children through the stages of language and communication development, and encourages students to

develop their interests in each of these areas. Teaching and learning is approached differently in each of the four subject areas of language arts. Following is a definition and description of each of these areas, as well as an outline of various teaching methods for the individual skills.

Listening

Listening is the first of the language skills to be developed in the child. Anderson and Lapp have said that "the primary learning mode for infants and young children is auditory."³ Children are exposed to a multitude of sounds in the environment, as well as the sounds of language, and by doing so have begun the development of the cognitive schemata which will serve as the basis for future knowledge. These experiences constitute the beginning of their subsequent development in language.

Listening itself is a complex term with three separate levels involved in its definition. According to Rubin, these three levels of listening are hearing, listening and "auding." Hearing, a purely physiological phenomenon, is the process of receiving and modifying sound waves. Listening is the identification of sound sequences as known patterns (if the patterns have been heard before). Auding, which involves comprehension and interpretation, is the highest level in the hierarchy. Some researchers have suggested that "to aud" is to listen with comprehension and appreciation.⁴

These levels in the listening hierarchy do not necessarily occur sequentially or in isolation. Usually, one cannot detach hearing from listening and auding. Though this concept requires a much more detailed presentation

than is possible within the scope of this research, the basic definitions provided above will be sufficient for understanding the following information.

Different types of listening can be thought of as different degrees of involvement in the communication process. Anderson and Lapp describe various types of student listening which teachers can then guide to more successful ausing. They are:

- Social Listening
- Secondary Listening
- Aesthetic Listening
- Critical Listening
- Concentrative Listening
- Creative Listening

Each of these types of listening involves different skills which develop at different age levels. For example, within Critical Listening there is "noting correct speech habits, word usage, and sentence elements of others," possible in grades kindergarten through eight, as well as "listening to interpret idioms and unusual language," possible in grades five through eight.⁵ Teachers can note the types of listening attainable at their grade level, and develop lessons and encourage students accordingly. For this research it is particularly interesting to note that Anderson and Lapp state that as a part of Creative Listening, students can "construct visual images while listening" (in grades 1-8) and "adapt imagery from imaginative thinking to create new results in writing, painting, and dramatizing" (grades 1-8).⁶ By extending the Anderson-Lapp theory, it may be possible to assert that children who can construct visual

images while listening to a story can, in turn, transfer those images to physical movement in the creation of a narrative dance.

Rubin describes numerous listening activities under various categories (auditory discrimination activities, concentration and following directions activities, listening comprehension activities, etc.). To teach children to listen to and follow oral directions, Rubin suggests an activity where the teacher selects a student to execute certain commands, such as, "stand up, go to the back of the room, and hop on your right foot."⁷ The difficulty of the given commands, or the length of the command sequence can be increased according to the ability of the students. To increase listening comprehension, the teacher may create a story in which the events are out of order. The children listen to the story and are then asked to put the events in the correct sequence.⁸

Criteria for evaluating listening skills are extensive. These language skills are necessary for the expression and transference of a narrative in written or oral form. Rubin's diagnostic checklist covers the listening areas in such a general manner that it is difficult to pinpoint the child's listening skill level. Furthermore, Rubin's introduction to her criteria does not address the fact that individual teachers will evaluate children differently using the one-to-ten method that she suggests. However, the criteria that she suggests are representative of the many different methods of evaluating listening skills. Following are a selected number of skills which Rubin uses in her Diagnostic Checklist for Aural Responsiveness (Listening):

Organic Listening:

- The child speaks very softly (loudly) (in a monotone)
- The child asks to have things repeated

Auditory Discrimination:

- The child can state another word that begins (ends) like . . . (list of words)
- The child can state another word that rhymes with . . . (list of words)

Listening Concentration:

- The child is able to follow orally presented sets of directions
- The child is able to repeat sets of digits in proper order (forward, backward)

Listening Comprehension:

- The child, after listening to a passage, can answer questions that relate to information explicitly stated in the passage (literal listening)
- The child, after listening to a passage, can answer questions dealing with divergent thinking (creative listening)⁹

These criteria represent general concepts within the area of listening and are to be altered depending on age, grade and skill level. These types of listening skills are fostered in dance. When learning movement, students are regularly asked to repeat steps in a given sequence -- these directions can be presented orally. If students are dealing with the presentation of characters in a narrative dance, they may be first asked to listen to the story and comprehend the sequence and implication of events therein. They evidence their comprehension through movement choices.

Speaking

Speaking is the use of sounds and symbols representing objects or concepts to communicate something. Communication is impossible, however, unless the listener is one who understands the connection between the symbols and the things or ideas to which they refer. Language, then, not only requires the use of the sounds to communicate, but also requires that the

person who is receiving the information understand the same set of symbols. (One who speaks only French will not be able to understand the symbols presented to him by another who is speaking English.) Communication results when all communicating parties understand the symbols being transferred.

Speaking is a complex function within the area of language arts. Most experts refer to speaking as "oral communication,"¹⁰ and within the language arts curriculum, the approaches to teaching oral communication, (or "speech instruction")¹¹ are varied. In reference to the skills which are taught as a part of speech instruction, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) issued these guidelines in 1983:

Students should learn:

- to speak clearly and expressively about their ideas and concerns
- to adapt words . . . according to varying . . . audiences . . .
- to participate productively . . . in small and large groups
- to present arguments in orderly and convincing ways
- to interpret and assess various kinds of communication, including intonation, pause, gesture, and body language that accompany speaking.¹²

Though these guidelines are distressingly vague, the reader must remember that the NCTE is endeavoring to address an entire nation of students with varied achievement levels.

For the successful teaching of these skills, most language arts texts address the following topics as necessary components of speech instruction:

- public and private language
- environmental factors
- developing speech sounds
- reading-independent activities (such as creative dramatics)¹³

The area of public and private language addresses the fact that students may come to school with a private or shorthand language which involves informal talking, or slang, that has been heard exclusively within their families or peer groups. These private languages include differences in dialect or in cultural tradition which prevent the child from being completely comfortable in the use of Standard English -- the public language. These private languages are not "wrong," but students need to be aware of and educated in public language because most reading material and spoken language is delivered in this form.

Many experts claim that the classroom environment is critical to the development of oral language skills. The classroom environment consists of four distinct sub-environments: physical; emotional; social; and intellectual. The physical environment should be constructed so that all students can hear and see any speaker. The emotional environment must make children feel secure and not threatened by embarrassment when they choose to speak. They must also feel that what they have to say is important. The social environment needs are inter-related with those of the emotional environment. The teacher needs to create a social environment where students can group together easily and comfortably for discussion. Finally, the classroom must be an intellectually stimulating environment -- one in which there are a variety of activities and other interests to stimulate discussion.

The development of oral language skills rests heavily upon the development of speech sounds. This involves teaching children to produce the English sounds correctly. Children are taught the correct articulation and phonetic movements so that the words they are speaking are accepted in the

public language. This area is extremely complex, dealing with everything from variables affecting articulatory development to types of speech defects (stuttering, cleft palate, etc.) to vocabulary enhancement. There are numerous methods, suggestions, and classroom games available to the teacher who is dealing with the topic of developing speech sounds which are too extensive to list here. However, one activity, mentioned by Anderson and Lapp, is described here both as an example of those speech development activities, and as an introduction to possible uses of narrative movement in this area of the language arts curriculum.

"Creative-Imaginative Situations" are those activities in which the teacher uses objects or statements to stimulate the children's imaginations. For example, a teacher may show three unrelated objects (a book, a dish, and a top hat) and ask the children to list some ways in which these items might be related. Or, with the same items, the teacher might ask the students to speculate (aloud, of course) about the person who owns them. A similar exercise might begin with a curious statement, such as: "what would happen if you woke up and all the trees were growing upside-down?". Each of these activities asks the child to use his/her imagination and develop a series of ideas which address the topic. In the appendix, a portion of the model will address a similar activity, but with the emphasis on using physical movement to describe the situation, and then words to describe the movement.

Another technique for oral language development involves reading-independent activities. These activities do not require oral reading skills, and they exclude such things as formal play productions and reading aloud to an audience. Most reading independent activities fall under the heading of

Creative Dramatics. These activities might include role playing, pantomime, and puppetry. (Storytelling can also be included in this category if the story is not read aloud from the text.) These activities will now be briefly examined.

In role playing activities, children are assigned a scenario, and perhaps even specific roles, but the dialogue is spontaneously developed. The children develop the dialogue based on what they have heard in similar situations. For example, when two students create a scene about buying and selling items, the children will likely use dialogue similar to what they have heard between real-life customers and salespeople. Through these activities, the children are learning oral language skills as well as becoming more comfortable speaking aloud in front of others.

Pantomime is the communication of an idea or situation without the assistance of speech. Students imitate actions appropriate to the characters in the situation they are portraying. Pantomime requires that the students think carefully and analytically about the moods and the situation they wish to act out. Though the actual exercise does not use oral language, students may talk about the exercise afterward, and use their language skills to describe choices they made in their pantomimic movements. These discussions take the form of asking the child to describe what he or she was portraying in pantomime. The teacher can stress the use of action words as well as descriptive phrases. The teacher can also encourage the child to find more than one word or phrase which describes his actions. For example, instead of saying only, "I ran to the treasure chest," the child could say, "I quickly approached," or, "I scampered," and so on. In this way movement has fostered both oral language and vocabulary skills.

Puppetry is similar to role playing, however, some children may feel more free to express themselves behind the puppet than as themselves. Animals, magic, and unique and exotic locations (in space, in the sea) are easier to manage through puppetry than through human acting. Because of these unusual locations or characters, puppetry can stimulate unique dialogue by the puppet's manipulator, as well as by the rest of the class in a post-production discussion of events.

Dance activities can be thought of as reading-dependent or reading-independent according to the basis for the movement. If the children read a story and then dance through the same story, the activity would be considered reading-dependent -- the student's involvement in the dance was directly related to his or her understanding of the text. If the students create their own story and dance through it, then the dance activity would be considered reading-independent. This narrative dance, telling a story through dance movement, may have an effect on the child's oral language skills. Perhaps after having danced one of the characters in a story, the child becomes aware of words which can be used to describe the character, the actions, and the emotions. This awareness may be enhanced by a post-dance discussion. When the child has actually moved in the character's role, he or she has begun to realize the many subtle physical and emotional changes present in the story. After dancing a character in a narrative dance, a child may be more able to find the words which describe the actions or emotions. A post-dance discussion allows the child to verbalize specific statements about the character and/or plot.

The criteria for evaluating oral language skills are extensive. The following are selected from Rubin's Diagnostic Checklist for Oral Communication and Speech Improvement:

Speech (general):

- The child's speech is distinct (inaudible) (monotonous) (expressive)

Nonverbal Communication:

- The child uses facial expression (hands) (body movements) effectively

Other:

- The child can describe in his or her own words an event that has occurred

Sentences:

- The child uses standard English (a variation of English)
- The child uses incomplete (simplistic) (involved) sentences¹⁴

These criteria represent general concepts within the area of speaking and would be altered depending on age, grade and skill level.

Reading

The question, "What is Reading?" has no one specific answer. Language arts books agree that there are many definitions for the term "reading" and attempt to address the topic by offering these kinds of broad definitions:

Reading is a process of comprehending written discourse that involves decoding and encoding.¹⁵

Reading is the bringing to and the getting of meaning from the printed page.¹⁶

The printed page is the result of an established sign system in which particular signs (letters, words) signify (refer to something other than themselves). As with listening, unless the participant (reader or listener) understands the sign system, comprehension is impossible. It is clear from various definitions of reading, and the material written about reading in language arts texts, that comprehension is one of the chief concerns. Without lengthy explanation, comprehension is a process requiring many complex abilities. The two foremost abilities involve word meanings and verbal reasoning. Edward L. Thorndike, in his research published in 1917, made this statement about reading comprehension,

Reading is a very elaborate procedure, involving a weighing of each of many elements in a sentence, their organization in the proper relations one to another, and the cooperation of many forces to determine final response.¹⁷

From the research of Thorndike and others, certain characteristics of "good" comprehenders become apparent. Those who comprehend well are able to do inferential reasoning, state central ideas, assimilate, categorize, compare and make relationships from the material given. They assimilate new material to concepts already known and understood, and relate their new learning to what they already know. Finally, good comprehenders are able to go beyond the given information often to develop new or different solutions. Dance activities prepare students to function successfully in these areas. To create movements for a particular character, the dancer must be able to take the known information about the character and develop from it those movements which will accurately portray the character. When choreographing or watching

narrative dances, the student identifies the central idea in the story and either demonstrates it in movement or can identify it in the movement presented. To adequately produce or watch narrative dances the student must also be involved in assimilating and categorizing the narrative material. This process, and the process of making relationships between the given material and other familiar material, is central in the process of watching or doing narrative dance. Each of the follow-up activities in the model in the appendix incorporates one portion of Thorndike's process of infer-assimilate-categorize-compare-relate. By asking the child to work through this process of comprehension, application, analysis and synthesis, the teacher can identify the child's level of achievement in language arts skills.

Anderson and Lapp describe five types of reading clues (for comprehension) which are taught as part of a child's word skills. These are:

1. Phonetic clues: both individual sound and the language flow of words, sentences and stories are involved.
2. Word-form clues: these are the forms or configuration of the word that give it some identity. (i.e. the silhouette or shadow of a word such as elephant, make it recognizably different from the word said.)
3. Structural clues: recognizing common endings such as -ing, -ed, and -tion, and recognizing that such words as raincoat are the combination of two words.
4. Sight word clues: clues that must be memorized through repetition. Such words as: "of", "one", "here", "what" and proper names.
5. Context analysis clues: found in the pictures of the book, in class discussion, or in the meaning of known words.¹⁸

Using these clues is a part of reading comprehension and must be taught and treated in such a manner. To help children develop good reading

comprehension, critical reading skills must also be taught. These critical skills require children to surpass the level of literal comprehension and use a higher level of thinking. Questions requiring this higher level may ask the child to develop a more complex interpretation. For example, after reading Little Red Riding Hood, Rubin suggests that the children be asked to respond orally to the following questions: "Do you think the wolf can talk? Explain. Do you think Little Red Riding Hood is a good girl? Explain." Higher level questioning can also be done in a creative vein with questions that stimulate divergent thinking on the reader's part. Rubin suggests, "After reading Little Red Riding Hood, can you come up with another ending for the story?".¹⁹

Both these exercises and the use of reading clues are meant to develop the student's reading and reading comprehension skills. Some of Rubin's criteria for evaluating these skills follow:

- The student is able to give the meaning of a sentence in a paragraph
- The student is able to state the main idea of the paragraph
- The student is able to summarize a paragraph
- The student is able to draw a conclusion from what is read
- The student can go beyond the text to come up with alternate solutions or ways to end a story or solve a problem in the selection
- The student can detect bias in a story ²⁰

These criteria represent general concepts within the area of reading and would be altered depending on age, grade and skill level. Rubin's criteria and Thorndike's guidelines for "good comprehenders" are not dissimilar. Though Thorndike speaks in the broader more general terms of assimilation and

categorization, his guidelines are quite comparable to Rubin's more specific criteria which ask the child to develop new endings and detect bias in a story. Rubin's criteria are the practical applications of Thorndike's theoretical assertions.

Writing

In Language and the Language Arts, authors Flood and Salus state that writing is a "sophisticated cognitive process in which the writer acquires, organizes, and produces information."²¹ Also in the effort to define the activity of writing, Anderson and Lapp have quoted Moffett, who suggests that the highest form of writing, the manifestation of thinking, is the revision of inner speech. Theories such as these present the notion that writing is truly a thinking and learning process. At this point it is important to note that this section will deal specifically with the writing process and writing as a creative act, and will not deal in detail with sub-topics such as handwriting or spelling.

At an early age when children first begin to make marks on paper, they are entering the first stage of writing. They are making an effort to convey something of their own with another person, through the use of the paper. With age the child gains better muscular control and the scribbling becomes written expression in the picture form. After learning how to form letters, the child begins to use words to express his ideas on paper. At this stage, learning the skills of written self-expression becomes necessary.

Depending on the source, the writing process is divided into three, four or seven stages. For the purposes of this research, the four stage model will be used. Those four stages are:

Pre-writing

Writing

Editing

Revising

(Editing and Revising are often reversed in other models.)

Although there are many different types of written expression, this research will limit discussion to the topic of creative writing, especially narrative writing. Language arts texts stress that motivation is an important facet of creativity and must be created by the teacher who wishes his or her students to begin a creative writing project.²² Pictures, literature, films, dramatic activity and dance can be the stimuli for such a project. As mentioned in the section on speaking, the teacher must make the classroom a secure environment where children feel free to take chances. Rubin lists twenty-three motivating techniques for stimulating creative writing. These three samples are chosen from that list:

1. Ask children to imagine that they live at the bottom of the sea. Ask them to tell of their adventures.
2. Ask children to write an imaginative theme beginning with the sentence, "There is only one hour to wait."
3. Hold up a number of pictures and ask students to write creative stories about them.²³

Rubin also stresses that description is an essential writing ingredient which develops when students become good observers of the world around

them. Students can develop their observational and descriptive skills through a number of Rubin's exercises, such as trying to guess what is in a brown bag using only the sense of touch.²⁴ Character development, and suspense are other necessary ingredients in creative writing, and the teacher must introduce and encourage the use of these skills through various exercises.

Again, Rubin's diagnostic checklist covers the writing areas in such a general manner that it is difficult to pinpoint the child's writing skill level and her criteria does not address the fact that individual teachers will evaluate children differently. However, the criteria that she suggests are representative of the many different methods of evaluating writing skills, and are presented here, despite their weakness, for that reason. Writing skills may be evaluated according to the following criteria selected from Rubin's Diagnostic Checklist for Written Expression as a Creative Act:

Description - Primary Grades:

- The child is able to describe a character from a television show
- The child is able to state descriptive words using each of the senses

Description - Intermediate Grades:

- The child is able to describe a scene
- The child is able to use simile, metaphor, personification

Character Development - Primary:

- The child is able to describe the appearance of an imaginary character
- The child is able to tell what the character would say in certain situations

Character Development - Intermediate:

- The child is able to describe the feelings of an imaginary character
- The child is able to relate the character to other characters

Stories - Primary:

- The child is able to write an imaginary story

- The child is able to finish the statement 'If I wore no shoes . . . '

Stories - Intermediate:

- The child is able to choose a topic, a title, and write an imaginary story, using proper sequence
- The child is able to produce suspense in his or her stories ²⁵

These criteria represent general concepts within the area of writing and are applied and developed appropriately by age, grade and skill level.

In summary, this chapter explored the language arts skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing by defining the area encompassed by each of these skills, presenting some exercises in current teaching practice, and showing the criteria for evaluation of skill level. The term "language arts" itself is defined as the portion of the elementary curriculum which includes listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening, the first of the language skills to be developed in the child, includes three levels: hearing, listening and auding. Speaking is the use of sounds and symbols which represent objects or concepts to communicate. Communication also requires that the person who is receiving the information understand the same set of symbols. Though language arts texts offer numerous definitions for reading, it is agreed that reading is a complex activity which involves the consideration of the many elements within a sentence and the organization of these elements in proper relationship. The final response of comprehension is one of the chief aspects of reading. Writing is a detailed process in which the writer develops, organizes and produces information. Within each of the previous skill areas, criteria representing general concepts were listed and given as guidelines for general

skills possible at particular levels. These language arts skills are basic to a child's functioning in society. Each of the skills encompasses more sub-topics and areas of specialization than are possible and/or appropriate to detail as a part of this investigation. In addition, those sources which were called upon for evaluation criteria were vague.

Thorndike and Rubin present general topics for skill assessment, but neither addresses the problem with real specificity. This specific testing is the responsibility of the elementary school district and the classroom teacher. All of the sources mentioned in this chapter do agree that the child must move through certain channels to become proficient in the language skills. These channels involve such skills as assimilation, categorization, analysis and synthesis and are the same skills that are developed through participation in dance activities. The follow-up activities in the model in Appendix A show direct relationship to these types of language skills. Finally, the areas covered in this chapter are representative of the larger topic of language arts and are meant to demonstrate the general skills necessary for effective and successful communication.

Notes

¹ Paul S. Anderson and Diane Lapp, Language Skills in Elementary Education (New York: Macmillan, 1988), 39.

² Dorothy Rubin, Teaching Elementary Language Arts, 3rd ed., (New York: Holt, 1985), 7.

³ Anderson 82.

⁴ Anderson 83.

⁵ Anderson 88.

⁶ Anderson 88.

⁷ Rubin 75.

⁸ Rubin 77.

⁹ Rubin 80-82.

¹⁰ Rubin 89.

¹¹ Anderson 105.

¹² Anderson 106.

¹³ Anderson 92.

¹⁴ Rubin 113-114.

¹⁵ Anderson 133.

¹⁶ Rubin 121.

¹⁷ Rubin 123.

¹⁸ Anderson 134.

¹⁹ Rubin 126.

20 Rubin 133.

21 J. Flood and P. Salus, Language and the Language Arts (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1984), 123.

22 Rubin 210.

23 Rubin 212.

24 Rubin 213.

25 Rubin 225-226.

CHAPTER 4

An Explanation of Selections within the Curriculum Model

Within the model presented in the appendix are references to various well-known ballets, modern dances and choreographers which may not be known to the reader. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the reasons behind the selection of these particular works/artists. This chapter will discuss dances, choreographers, and finally cover some movement activities in the model which require clarification. The explanations will also include cross-references to the appropriate lesson number and/or page in the model in the appendix.

Dances

The following ballets are included in the model as dances which the student views as part of the lesson plan: Fancy Free (Watching: Speaking 1, Week 1), Peter and the Wolf (Watching: Speaking 1, Week 2), and Cinderella (Watching: Reading 1, Week 1). Two of these ballets were choreographed based on familiar childrens' stories. One of the reasons for the inclusion of Peter and the Wolf and Cinderella in the model is because these dances have their roots in fairy tales, as well as recognition as childrens' stories. In each of the lesson plans in which these dances are used, the attempt is to acquaint

students with the fact that dance/movement can tell a story (without words). Many of the children will already be familiar with these stories which is helpful. (It is not necessary, nor should it affect the outcome of the study, if a child has never heard these stories.) The stories contain elements such as magic, triumph of good over evil, and happy endings which have made them classics in children's literature. Because these stories were written specifically for the child audience, they incorporate these types of elements which attract and captivate the child. Consequently, the dance version of the story may have the same effect.

Fancy Free, choreographed by Jerome Robbins in 1944, is selected because, in the words of George Amberg, "Robbins' characters too dance, not because he devises meaningful or beautiful steps for them, but because they are so conceived that they cannot do otherwise, because there is a physical and emotional exuberance in them which, of necessity, becomes dance."¹ The ballet is developed from the concept of the activities of three sailors on shore leave. Though not a children's story, the events and personalities in Fancy Free are clearly defined for the young viewer. There are movements which represent the exuberant attitudes of the sailors as well as the nonchalance and coquettishness of the women. Another factor influencing the selection of Fancy Free is its varied movement vocabulary. It is described by Robbins himself as a "jazz ballet."² Robbins strayed somewhat from the standard vocabulary of ballet to create movements which he felt better suited his characters. Students will benefit from seeing this variation in movement vocabulary because several of the other selected pieces are from the ballet genre.

The plot line of each of these ballets is also straightforward and relatively easy for the child to follow. Because the plot line is understandable and not overly complex, the child can focus clearly on the movement presentation. It is clear that both of these ballets were created specifically for the child audience. For this reason alone, they are appropriate viewing material for the classroom. An additional reason for their selection is that they illustrate the narrative possibilities of movement. Each of the four ballets uses elements of the dance vocabulary in a narrative manner to express the story line.

In summary, these ballets were chosen for the model lesson plans because: their subject matter attracts and captivates the child's interest, some children may have previous knowledge of the stories which may increase their understanding and/or attentive abilities, the plot lines are straightforward, two of the ballets were created specifically for the child audience, and each of the ballets is a concrete example of narrative movement.

Agnes de Mille's Rodeo (Watching: Writing 2, Week 1) was selected for reasons different from those of the aforementioned ballets. de Mille's ballet is not based on a children's story, and there is little chance that the children will be familiar with this story as they may be with the stories of the other ballets. However, Rodeo offers numerous advantages despite its less familiar story. In her choreography, de Mille has created a solid plot which demonstrates clear relationships between characters. The lesson in the model asks the children to look carefully at these relationships. In this "Western Cinderella" story of a tomboyish cowgirl who competes with the more sophisticated Rancher's Daughter for the attention of men, the actions and emotions of the characters are of prime importance. This lesson is far enough along in the narrative dance

curriculum that the students are ready to see this type of character development in movement. In addition, the teacher is instructed to preface the videotape with an introduction to the story and direct the children to watch for the movements that show relationships between characters. The genuinely American Rodeo (with music by Aaron Copland) is selected especially for its exploration of relationships between characters through narrative movement.

The other works named in the model, Polaris and Moor's Pavane, are modern dances. Polaris (Watching: Reading 2, Week 1) is not a narrative dance and is chosen specifically for that reason. The movement in the first section of the piece is repeated exactly and entirely in the second section. Choreographer Paul Taylor has chosen to change only one aspect between the two sections, the music. By the time Polaris is shown the students have progressed through almost three-quarters of the narrative dance curriculum. Polaris is selected to demonstrate non-narrative dance as well as the effect of music on the mood of a piece, and Polaris helps to define narrative movement by defining what is not narrative movement. It has been chosen for the lesson plan because it is clearly non-narrative.

Jose Limon's Moor's Pavane (Watching: Writing 1, Week 2) is a narrative modern dance based on Shakespeare's Othello. In the model, the lesson plan using Moor's Pavane directly follows the lesson using Rodeo. Limon's choreography has been selected to demonstrate narrative movement in the form of modern dance. As with Rodeo, most students will not be familiar with the stories of Othello, Iago and their wives. The teacher is directed to introduce the story to the students before watching. In this lesson students are focusing

on relating characters within a story. Limon's modern dance is an excellent example of relationships between characters.

Choreographers

Four choreographers are named in the model: Paul Taylor, Jose Limon, Merce Cunningham, and Alwin Nikolais. The works of Taylor and Limon have been discussed above and the choreographers do not need to be addressed individually. However, in the case of Cunningham and Nikolais, the model does not name a particular piece of choreography. Rather, the model asks the teacher to select a non-narrative piece from the repertory of either choreographer.

Both Cunningham and Nikolais are clearly non-narrative choreographers who have created works which are specifically impersonal, without characters, and sometimes "non-human." Each man has developed a choreographic and movement style which is devoid of emotion. In discussing Cunningham's style, David Michael Levin says,

This form is entirely abstract; the movement is very expressive, although it rigorously excludes every quality of expression not wholly immanent in the dancers' abstract movements.³

In this lesson (Watching: Writing 2, Week 2), the last of the lessons for the Watching Only group, the abstract choreography of Cunningham and Nikolais has been selected particularly for its non-narrative qualities. Similar to the lesson using Taylor's Polaris, by viewing Cunningham's or Nikolais' abstract

pieces, the students begin to see differences between narrative and non-narrative dances with respect to relationships between characters.

Stories

The following section refers to stories referred to in the model which require clarification.

Alice in Wonderland is selected as a reference point for choreography development in Watching: Speaking 2, Week 1. Lewis Carroll's story is selected because it is a classic in childrens' literature, and because much of the text is movement and action oriented. The first section of the story demonstrates the emphasis Carroll places on action,

Suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her . . . when the Rabbit actually took a watch out of its waistcoat pocket, and looked at it, an then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, and burning with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge.⁴

When the dancer creates the solo depicting Alice's fall down the rabbit hole, he or she translates the action words in the text into movement. Alice in Wonderland has been chosen for this lesson because the text offers many opportunities for this type of translation, and also because the story is geared for children.

Movement Activities

The following section refers to movement activities, referred to in the Doing section of the model, which require clarification.

In Doing: Listening 1, Week 1, the students are asked to show the movement characteristics of any animal they choose. Animals are selected for this early lesson because most students are familiar with animal movement by the third grade. They have seen animals move at the zoo, on television, in cartoons, and have learned about animal movement in science lessons. By choosing animal movement for the first lesson, the students are immediately on familiar ground and may be more at ease in the dance lesson.

Students are asked to make shapes which represent letters of the alphabet in Doing: Listening 2, Week 1. As with the animal lesson, this alphabet lesson occurs early in the lesson sequence. Making alphabet shapes is a non-threatening exercise which allows the child to begin to explore his or her movement potential without the risk involved in creating movement which represents, for example, full story lines or emotions. Alphabet shapes are well known to third grade students and the lesson can be expanded to creating cursive shapes if the children are motivated to do further work.

As students progress through the lesson plans they are frequently required to work in groups. (Small group activities occur as early as Doing: Listening 2, Week 2.) Group work encourages equal participation from all members, and allows less confident students the security of sharing the focus with others. The next few paragraphs will clarify the group activities in the Doing lesson plans.

Students create short dances showing a comic struggle in Doing: Listening 2, Week 2. Each dance must have one humorous section and the audience is asked to discuss this section after the dance is performed. The dancers derive benefits from working as a team to develop their dance, and the audience develops observational skills as they try to locate and remember the humorous section of the dance. Knowing that there is an humorous section and that they must locate and remember it, gives the watching audience a sense of purpose. Learning to watch purposefully is related to Listening for Purpose, the language arts skill which is the foundation for this activity.

In several lessons the teacher suggests scenarios or events for which the students then build dances or studies. In each of these lessons, the exact subject matter can vary extensively. The lesson plan gives examples for the type of appropriate subject matter: a distant relative visits, people go to a play, a party celebration; however, these suggestions are by no means the only possible choices for movement. The events and scenarios given in the lesson plans have been selected for their general appropriateness to the given language arts topic and dance activity.

In the lesson plan for Doing: Speaking 2, Week 2, the movement activity requires students to focus on a single goal, reaching the other side of the circle. The language arts topic relating to this lesson plan is similar: State the main idea of a paragraph. The movement activity has been chosen because it requires the student to focus his entire body, brain and energy on the one particular goal of moving across the circle. If the student does not focus fully on the goal, he or she will be distracted by others who come too close or otherwise obstruct the pathway. This movement activity both physicalizes and internalizes

the same type of process needed to find and state the main idea of a written paragraph.

The lesson plans for Doing: Reading 1, Week 1 and Doing: Reading 1, Week 2 involve the same movement activity. The students are asked to create a study about a trip to a place where items are purchased, and then the following week, distill the study to half its previous length while still keeping the general meaning and sequence of events intact. This type of activity has been chosen because it supports the language arts topic for these lessons: Summarize a paragraph. Students will learn quickly that they cannot portray each of the details of the trip to the store. In order to create a movement study, they must pick and choose those movements which are most critical to the general sequence and audience understanding. To create their study, the students must first create their story and then reduce it to an appropriate length. This reduction process involves summarizing the story in order to select the particular parts which will be demonstrated in movement. These activities are selected for the lesson plan because of their connection to the language arts topic.

In following lessons, students create more short dances which tell stories (Doing: Reading 2, Weeks 1 and 2). Instead of distilling the movement by summarizing the story, in this lesson the students create a dance and present it to the class. The rest of the class observes the dance and suggests alternate endings. The dancers choose a new ending from the suggestions and replace their original ending before showing it to the class again. This movement activity has been selected because it asks that the students see more than one possible ending for a given story. Members of the audience benefit from the

activity of suggesting new endings for other dances and the movement activity directly correlates to the language arts topic: Developing alternate endings for existing stories.

For the lesson plan Doing: Writing 1, Week 1, students create solo movement studies which concentrate on the portrayal of an emotion. This movement activity has been selected because it relates directly to the language arts topic for this lesson: Character Description. A written description of a character will most often include a description of the character's emotion at that particular moment. This movement activity allows the students to physicalize various emotions and represent them in a visual, not written, manner. A similar movement activity is presented for the same reason during the following session, Doing: Writing 1, Week 2.

The final movement activities are found in Doing: Writing 2, Weeks 1 and 2. In these activities the students use movement to show relationship between characters. The students must search their dance vocabulary for shapes and locomotor patterns which, when done with a partner, begin to illustrate a relationship. As they learn which movements show relationship between characters, the connection between the movement activity and the language arts topic: Relating one character to another within a story, is formed. This movement activity has been selected for this lesson plan because it is the physical representation of the language arts topic.

This chapter has attempted to clarify the reasoning behind the choices of the dance activities in the lesson plan. The choreographers, ballets or modern dances, stories, and movement activities have been addressed individually in

order to provide the reader with the foundation necessary to understand the model found in the appendix. Each of the dance activities was selected for a particular reason, be it the story line of the dance, the choreographer's approach to movement or the student's cognitive or physical abilities at that point. None of the dance activities in the model was chosen at random. Each was selected or developed for its reference to the language arts topic presented in the lesson. Additional information covering how to present the activities, and follow-up language arts activities are presented in the model in the appendix.

Notes

¹ George Amberg, Ballet in America, (New York: Duell, 1949), 130.

² Amberg 132.

³ David Michael Levin, "Balanchine's Formalism," in What is Dance?, eds. Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 129.

⁴ Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland, abridged and prepared under the supervision of Josette Frank (New York: Random House, 1955), 3-4.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

This thesis has examined the possible applications of Narrative Dance to the development of childrens' language arts skills and has presented a model to determine how dance might impact these skills. The question of how dance may impact language arts learning remains as the model has not been field tested as a part of this research. This would naturally be the next step. To undertake the process of testing the model requires the understanding of some of the inherent difficulties in such a process. These difficulties, as well as additional theoretical issues, will be considered in this chapter.

Narrative dance has been defined by this research as dance which describes, through movement, a set of events which have an influence on represented characters and the relationships between those characters. A narrative dance such as Clytemnestra demonstrates how physical movements are used to construct an extremely complicated story through dance. The ability of dance to portray complex stories like the myth of Clytemnestra establishes the validity of dance as a storytelling tool. Though narrative dances have been present throughout dance history, the use of narrative dance in the classroom has not been documented.

Prominent dance authors such as Joyce, Stinson, Humphrey and Boorman have worked with the concept of dance as a learning tool, but none

have specifically examined the use of narrative dance. However, each of these authors has made some type of connection between verbal cues and movement, establishing the important link between the understanding of words and the creation of physical action. As Joyce's work demonstrates, the verbal cues show the thought process involved as dancers develop characters. A critical question for further research is whether this process can work in reverse. If words can help the child choose movement, can movement help the child choose the appropriate words to describe a character or set of events? The model presented in the appendix proposes to test this type of question.

Of this collection of dance authors, only Joyce comes close to addressing the topic of narrative dance. The works of Boorman, Humphrey and Stinson, while valuable, are insufficient sources in the area of narrative dance. In general, published dance research is seriously lacking in the area of narrative dance and language arts connections. Library research turned up no evidence of studies which test the impact of using narrative dance to improve language arts skills. It is possible, however, that such research has been done but not documented. If the results from testing the model in this thesis are published, there will finally be material available in this area.

Understanding the basic concepts behind the four language arts skills is not difficult. Language arts experts such as Rubin, Anderson, Lapp, and Flood give concise descriptions of what is involved in each of the four areas. Their weakness becomes apparent when they discuss the evaluation of these skills. Each suggests criteria, diagnostic checklists, and general one-to-ten evaluation methods for the classroom teacher. None describe the exact skills a child should possess at the end of a particular grade or school year. Dealing with the

methods for evaluating progress and proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing is problematic. Much of the concern arises from the fact that though a large number of evaluation methods are available, each method is inexorably linked to the subjectivity of the classroom teacher and the uniqueness of each child. Until the child is tested by the school district regulated tests at the end of the school year, no completely objective results are available. There are also those who debate the standardized tests claiming that they do not adequately address variation in race, culture and social status. Finally, the state of California produces only language arts guidelines, not criteria for the evaluation of language arts skills. Individual school districts purchase tests from independent firms for the end-of-year testing of their students which causes further discrepancy when comparing scores from various districts.

This absence of state-mandated criteria for evaluation of language arts skills causes great difficulty in the development and testing of a model such as the one presented in this thesis. Because each classroom teacher may test the progress of his or her children differently, a singular series of follow-up activities had to be designed for use with this model. This series of follow-up activities allows the researcher to compare data between groups with the assurance that the children are being tested under exactly the same circumstances. Had there been a state-mandated year-long series of language arts achievement tests, the data could be evaluated more easily. Further study into this area may reveal the presence or absence of such state-mandated tests in other parts of the country, which may or may not be helpful to the final evaluation of the data gathered from the testing of this model.

As stated previously, the prime difficulty with the application of such a model is the measurement of data. The testing of the model will require great time and detail to organize both people and data to demonstrate the effectiveness of the model. One of the problems with the implementation of this model is getting administrators, teachers and researchers to accept the complexity of the experiment. This model requires the construction of a scientific measurement which can demonstrate the impact of the arts on learning. Often arts programs are cut because it is difficult to see their connection to the educational objectives already in place. If the data gathered from the application of this model and the organization of the results can show a relationship between narrative dance and language arts skills, then perhaps this study will serve as support for the inclusion not only of dance, but of other arts programs in education. The importance of this model rests in the fact that it can apply as this type of support for the other arts. The general concept of using the components of one curriculum, language arts, with activities associated with an art form, narrative dance, can be developed further to applications in many different contexts. The measurement of the learning variables can offer definitive support for the protection of the arts in curriculum by showing its relation to other curriculum subjects such as mathematics, language arts and science.

When evaluating the data from the implementation of this model, it will be important to develop an instrument for measuring the difference in scores relative to culture, race and other similar variables. In its current form the model accomomodates these variables in racial and social diversity, however it is critical that the final testing and measurement of the results do the same. The

model can be repeated, and the measurement instrument restructured, to test for individual variables because the model itself is not responsible for discrepancy in scores.

The conclusion of this research is that further study in the area of dance and its potential connection to language arts is imperative. At this point the research data is inconclusive and the model presented herein is only the beginning of a much longer, more detailed process. Further research must also consider the relationship between dance (narrative and non-narrative) and other areas of curriculum. The possibility of establishing relationships between other art forms and curriculum studies should also be explored. Each of these subjects will require detailed study including the development of a model for testing, and the creation of an instrument to measure the data gathered from the application of the model. The model produced in this research is the first of these steps to protect and foster the inclusion of the arts in elementary curriculum.

APPENDIX

A Narrative Dance Curriculum Model

The model presented in this appendix is intended to guide the classroom teacher or specialist in a method for using narrative dance in the third grade language arts curriculum. The model's significance rests in the fact that it presents the conditions under which the potential impact of dance on language arts skills can be determined. In a non-testing situation, however, the classroom teacher can use and develop the model's dance activities as a part of classroom learning activities. The classroom teacher may adjust, add to, or eliminate any of the dance activities based on the level of the students in the classroom. In the experimental scenario where the purpose is to use the model to determine whether narrative dance has impact on the child's language arts learning, the model's activities should be presented in sequence and with careful attention to the details presented. The model accommodates racial and social diversity; however, the experiment could be repeated and tested for this and other variables.

Research of other education and dance curriculum literature indicates that the dance activities herein are appropriate for the third grade level and age group. Information from such texts as Mary Joyce's First Steps in Teaching Creative Dance to Children and the State of California's Visual and Performing Arts Framework (1982) indicate levels of movement complexity possible at various ages as well as appropriate activities. The dance activities listed herein

are reflective of this information. (Further sources are listed in the notes for this chapter.) Language arts guidelines and activities are taken or developed from Teaching Elementary Language Arts by Dorothy Rubin, the Language Arts Framework (1987) and the Model Curriculum Standards for the Visual and Performing Arts Grades Nine through Twelve (1985). (An updated Model Curriculum Standards for the Visual and Performing Arts for grades K-8 is expected to be published by the State of California in Fall 1991 or Spring 1992.)

To use this model to test the impact of narrative dance on language arts skill development, the student population must be divided into four groups. The groups must be relatively equal in size, and diversified in current academic achievement level. Group One is the control group, doing no dance activities. Group Two follows the Watching Only lesson plans. Group Two does not physically participate in movement activities. (In this chapter, watching will be referred to as a dance activity even though no movement is actually performed by the student.) Group Three follows the Doing Only lesson plans. Group Three does not observe any narrative movement, except that which is presented by other students in the class as part of the lesson. Group Four combines both Watching Only and Doing Only lesson plans. Group Four experiences both aspects of observing and participating in movement activities.

The study covers thirty-two weeks of activities and lessons. This is approximately equal to one school year. (Most school years are thirty-six weeks in length, excluding vacation time.) The model lessons are planned to follow the sequence: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing. The lessons are arranged in this manner:

(1) Listening Guideline One (two weeks)

(2) Listening Guideline Two (two weeks)

The same sequence is followed for the Speaking, Reading and Writing guidelines. It is clear that students can not wait until the ninth and tenth weeks of school to begin reading exercises. The model accommodates the fact that students will have begun work in the various curriculum areas before the first dance activity in that area.

All groups will participate in the school's regular language arts curriculum. For accurate assessment data, all groups, including Group One, will participate in the Follow-Up Language Arts Activities at the end of each week. Groups Two and Three will devote forty-five minutes per week to the model dance activities. Group Four will devote forty-five minutes two times per week in order to cover both the Watching and Doing material. All dance activity time should be scheduled between Monday and Wednesday. The Follow-Up Activities should be presented to all four groups on Friday. (Even though Group Four participates in both a watching and a doing session per week, they still participate in only the one regular Friday Follow-Up Activity session per week.)

Students in all four groups participate in school-wide achievement testing at the end of the school year. The scores on the achievement tests may be read to determine a possible correlation between dance activities and language arts learning. The achievement tests can also demonstrate the effects of dance on long term language arts learning. The evaluation of the students' work on the weekly Follow-Up Activities can demonstrate the short term effects of dance activities on language arts learning. Achievement testing and weekly Follow-Up Activities should also be analyzed in order to identify possible

differences between "watching only" and "doing only" groups. It is unknown at this time whether (watching or doing) dance will show a positive effect over language arts learning in the short term, long term or both. Similarly, there may be no discernible difference between short and long term effects. Analyses of progress on the weekly Follow-Up Activities and yearly achievement tests can provide the necessary data to answer these questions.

In the following section, each of the areas of the model lesson plans will be described in a general nature. Each of the model's lesson plans is headed with a statement such as:

WATCHING - LISTENING 1 WEEK 1

"Watching" refers to the type of lesson plan. This lesson will be used for both Group Two (Watching Only) and Group Four (Watching and Doing). "Listening 1" refers to the language arts skill area and denotes whether this is the first or second guideline/skill for that area. "Week 1" denotes whether this is the first or second week plan. Following this heading is the statement of the language arts guideline for the lesson plan, such as:

LISTENING 1: Following the sequential development of a story

The remainder of the lesson plan is divided into three parts: Dance Activity, Commentary, and Follow-Up Activity.

The Dance Activity is the physical or observational exercise for the lesson. "Watching Only" lessons include the use of video or film, in-class presentation by guest performers, and attendance at live professional dance performances. "Doing Only" lessons include some level of physical movement in each session. Students are asked to follow specific movement direction

given by the teacher, to create movement in groups and alone, and often to perform movement studies for the class.

The Commentary section of each lesson plan addresses problems which may occur during the lesson. This section functions as a teacher's guide with suggestions for making the lesson run smoothly. Within the Commentary are options for dealing with larger classes and students whose movement skills may need extra attention.

The Follow-Up Activities relate directly to the language arts curriculum. Because the enhancement of language arts skills does not depend on how the child relates the dance narrative after dancing, but rather how the dance activity can aid narrative skills in general, the follow-up language arts activities show no specific relation to the dance activity. Instead, the Follow-Up Activity concentrates on the child's capacity to participate in any narrative language activity. There are four language arts activities for each language arts guideline (two per week/lesson). The activities progress in difficulty. The first and second activities, in the first week/lesson, focus on the most basic abilities within the given language arts area. The third and fourth activities, in the second week/lesson, concentrate on more complex abilities within the same area. For example, the first activity asks the child to answer questions with all the information and choices given to him. The second activity asks the child to sort through the given information and eliminate unnecessary details and/or organize the information appropriately. The third and fourth activities require increasing independence and creativity from the child, asking him to provide answers without clues, or create material of his own.

It must be stated that the Follow-Up Activity is technical in nature, and thereby not comprehensive. This technical nature is necessary in order to test the impact of dance on language arts curriculum. However, there are numerous other activities which can show and develop narrative language skills which have not been included. These activities, such as "show and tell," have not been included because the evaluation of the child's progress in such activities is highly subjective and therefore difficult to analyze in this type of study. The Follow-Up Activity places significant emphasis on right and wrong answers, and does not measure whether the child has placed greater importance in telling, reading or writing stories based on the dance experience. Again, this is the nature of this type of activity, and other activities may be included at the teacher's discretion, while not being a part of the evaluation data.

The model follows, separated into two sections. The first section includes the "Watching Only" plans, and the second section includes the "Doing Only" plans. As stated previously, the success of the study depends on the presentation of the model in the sequence it is given. When working with Group Four, the watching and doing group, the researcher should use one of the appropriate watching and doing plans each week, rather than doing two watching plans in the first week and two doing plans in the second week. As is necessary for optimum evaluation of the data, the follow-up activities given here are identical each week for Group Two and Group Three, and by extension Group Four. A final evaluation of the model was given in Chapter 5.

The following section contains the lesson plans for Group Two, the "Watching" group. Because of the nature of dance activities and the fact that full exploration of a topic may not be possible in the time allotted for one session, several of the following lessons continue over a two-session period. For this reason, the teacher is advised to read at least one lesson ahead of his or her class.

WATCHING - LISTENING 1, WEEK 1**LISTENING 1: Following the sequential development of a story****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

A dancer briefly discusses the content of a short narrative dance and then performs that dance for the students. (This could be done by advanced students or professionals.) These dances should be solos up to two minutes in length. A sample dance topic can be a trip to the zoo where the dancer meets three or four animals whose movements are detailed in the choreography. The dancer gives a general explanation of the sequence, as well as names the animals which will be represented. The dancer or teacher can ask, "Did you find the elephant in the dance? Where did the elephant go? What happened to him next?". (The choreography should be structured so that there are clear answers to these questions. For example, the elephant went to drink water from the pool and he fell in.)

COMMENTARY:

The dance should detail three or four animals doing not more than two actions each. The choreography must be simple and straightforward with attention to major details. For example, the elephant can be represented by heavy, weighted movement and a swinging trunk, in contrast to a frog who can be represented by springing, darting movement. The progression of the actions must be well defined.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) Students are read a short story aloud and then given a written list of the main events of the story and asked to number (organize) that list ordering the events in sequence. Example:

Directions: The events below are from the story you heard today. Number them 1 to 5 in the order you heard them in the story.

- ___ the dog ran away
- ___ Tommy opened the gate
- ___ Tommy put up pictures of his dog in the neighborhood
- ___ Mrs. Smith told Tommy to take out the garbage
- ___ Mr. Nelson brought Sparky inside

(2) The teacher reads a story in which the events are given in an illogical, incorrect order. The children order the events correctly by numbering them on paper. Example:

Directions: The events below are listed in the same way that you heard them in the story. Number them 1 to 5 so that the story will be in the right order and make sense. (List events as read aloud.)

WATCHING - LISTENING 1, WEEK 2

LISTENING: Following the sequential development of a story

DANCE ACTIVITY:

One dancer and one assistant are needed. The assistant calls out dance terms taking a few seconds between each for the dancer to do the appropriate movement. For example, "bend, stretch, twist, turn, elevate, fall." The sequence should be repeated three times with the assistant calling out the same terms, but the dancer may make slightly different shapes (this shows children that dance vocabulary has a wide range and that there can be more than one correct response). The dancer then repeats the same sequence two times without the assistant. The children should identify the order of the shapes. The assistant may then step in and introduce more complex sequences, such as, "Run to a place and stop in a twisted shape, stay in that shape as you make a full turn, travel in that shape to a new place, collapse". The dancer performs the new sequence two times with and two times without the assistant.

COMMENTARY:

Information contained in Measuring Intelligence by Lewis M. Terman and Maud A. Merrill and reported by Dorothy Rubin, indicates that the norm for children ages seven to nine is repetition of five digits forward and three to four digits in reverse.¹ Based on that research, each of the above sequences contains no more than six directions. If there is time in the session, the assistant could ask the children to close their eyes and guess what type of shape the dancer is in by thinking about where the dancer is in the sequence. For example, the assistant has called out "Change!" three times, so the dancer must be doing "twist".

Special attention must be given to choosing movement words which the child understands.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

- (1) The teacher reads a short story aloud and asks the students to determine and list (on paper) the main events in correct sequence.
- (2) Children are asked to write a short story (approximately one paragraph) which contains five events in a logical progression.

WATCHING - LISTENING 2, WEEK 1

LISTENING 2: Listening for Purpose

DANCE ACTIVITY:

One dancer and one assistant are needed. The assistant explains that the dancer will be creating shapes that represent letters of the alphabet. The dancer should present one or two shapes as an example while the assistant calls out the corresponding letters. The assistant explains that the dancer will now "spell out" his/her name and the students are asked to call out what they see. Students can then spell out their names aloud while the class watches the dancer perform the name physically.

COMMENTARY:

Special care must be taken to ensure that each letter that is danced is also said aloud at least twice (before and after or before and during). Time permitting, the exercise can be extended to include spellings of other words or more elaborate movements (i.e. spelling in cursive).

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) The teacher reads a story, such as Margaret Wise Brown's Where Have You Been? aloud. The students keep track, in tally form, of how many animals are mentioned in the story.

(2) The teacher reads a story to the students which presents the wrong animals making the wrong sounds. For example, a sheep barks, a dog whinnies, etc.

The students are given a sheet with a list of animals on one side and a list of sounds on the other side, such as:

sheep

moo

cow	baa
horse	bark
dog	whinny

The students draw lines connecting the animal and the INCORRECT sound it made in the story.

WATCHING - LISTENING 2, WEEK 2**LISTENING 2: Listening for Purpose****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

Before this dance is performed, the student audience is told that there will be a funny section in the dance at some point. The children are instructed to raise hands at the funniest part. Students watch this group dance (four to six dancers) which narratively depicts people at a bus stop. The dancers arrive at the bus stop, become increasingly impatient, and finally have a comic struggle getting on the bus. The "bus" moves away leaving the unsuccessful dancers in a pile on the ground.

COMMENTARY:

The dance activity requires children to watch for the climax, or the funniest part, of the dance. If the dance is done to music, with the musical climax coordinated with the movement climax, the students could also be asked to listen for the musical climax.. The dance can be performed by older students, or a local dance company and should be relatively short (two to three minutes).

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) The children listen carefully to this transcript of a phone conversation.
(Read twice.) "The phone rings in the Stewart house. Jane picks up the phone. Mrs. Brown is calling for Jane's mother who is not at home and asks Jane to take a message. 'Please tell your mother that we are meeting at Mrs. Drake's house, not Mrs. Crane's. Also tell her to bring the paper plates, not the cups.'"2
Ask the children to answer these questions:

- 1) Who answered the phone? a) Jane b) Mrs. Stewart c) Mrs. Brown

2) Who was calling? a) Jane b) Mrs. Brown c) Mrs. Crane

3) Where is the meeting going to be? a) at Mrs. Brown's b) at Mrs. Drake's c) at Jane's

4) What should Mrs. Stewart bring? a) cups b) plates c) forks

(2) Students listen to one side of a pre-recorded phone conversation (with pauses in place of responses). Play the tape once, then a second time after giving out sheets which have the recorded script and a blank area to write in the responses. Ask the children to fill in the responses.³

WATCHING - SPEAKING 1, WEEK 1

SPEAKING 1: Describe an event aloud

DANCE ACTIVITY:

Students watch short dances, or sections of dances (up to two minutes in length) which narratively present a particular aspect or event in the character's life. Before the dance, an assistant or narrator explains the scene that will be performed. The dance can be live, or, filmed sections of dances such as Fancy Free may be used.

COMMENTARY:

The dances need not be long to show an event in the character's life. It is important, however, that the dance presents an event that can be described easily in words -- the dance must be very literal at this point. The dance teacher may find it helpful to discuss the dance afterwards.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

- (1) The students recite a simple nursery rhyme or poem aloud.
 - (2) The teacher tells/reads a well known fairy tale aloud stopping before the end of the story. Children are asked to create and tell (aloud) a different ending.
- For larger classes, the teacher should be prepared with several fairy tales.

WATCHING - SPEAKING 1, WEEK 2**SPEAKING 1: Describe an event aloud****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

Students watch a live or videotaped performance of a narrative dance which places emphasis on describing events rather than characters. Fancy Free is a good choice.

COMMENTARY:

The dance teacher can tell the story beforehand if he/she feels that the students need extra help in understanding the events in the story. Students can discuss the story after the performance, but this is not required.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) Students build a story. With the class sitting in a circle, the teacher creates the first line of a story. Each student adds one sentence to the story, being careful to agree with what has come before, until one student decides the story is complete and says, "the end".

(2) Students are asked to describe for the class an event in which they have been involved. The teacher should prompt students with suggestions such as, "tell us what you did on your last birthday!".

WATCHING - SPEAKING 2, WEEK 1

SPEAKING 2: State the main idea of a paragraph

DANCE ACTIVITY:

One dancer and one assistant are needed. Prior to this meeting the dancer has created a solo dealing with Alice's fall down the rabbit hole in Alice in Wonderland. The dancer performs the solo (approximately two minutes in length) while the assistant reads excerpts from the passage. After the dance ask the students about what they saw.

COMMENTARY:

The assistant should read only excerpts from the passage, stopping in places and allowing the movement to describe what happened next. The assistant and dancer have to be coordinated and well rehearsed. The students should be encouraged to talk about all parts of the dance, but especially those which were not narrated. This discussion is not meant to evaluate how well the students understood the dance, but rather to give them the opportunity to learn to talk about movement, and to generally express their feelings about what they saw.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

- (1) The students read a paragraph from a book aloud.
 - (2) The teacher reads a paragraph aloud and the students are asked to select the main idea of the paragraph from a list of possibilities on the blackboard.
- The students raise hands and answer aloud.

WATCHING - SPEAKING 2, WEEK 2**SPEAKING 2: State the main idea of a paragraph****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

A dancer prepares a solo which consists primarily of a linear locomotor pattern taking him/her to another location in the dance space. The locomotor pattern is "interrupted" by movement phrases or shapes reflecting the terms, "bend, stretch, twist, turn, elevate, fall". After each movement phrase the dancer returns to the locomotor pattern, focusing on the destination. The dancer should select musical accompaniment which utilizes a primary theme "interrupted" by variations. If such a piece is not available, the dancer could use a single piece of music and tape record it with sections of silence for the "interruptions". In either case, each time the musical theme returns, the dancer should return to and continue the linear locomotor pattern.

COMMENTARY:

Before the performance of the solo, the dance teacher should explain that the dancer has a particular destination in the dance. The students should be directed to watch the dancer's focus to determine the destination. The students may also be told that the "interrupting" phrases will deal with movement elements they already know (bend, stretch, etc.). The students can call out the movement element when they see it.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) The teacher reads a paragraph aloud and students are asked to state the main idea of the paragraph. The students raise hands and answer aloud.

(2) Students write a paragraph elaborating upon a main idea. The students state the main idea of their paragraph in a sentence at the bottom of the page. Students read these paragraphs aloud to the class.

WATCHING - READING 1, WEEK 1

READING 1: Summarize a paragraph

DANCE ACTIVITY:

Show the first fifteen minutes of a videotape of Cinderella. Show the tape again, without sound, while reading the corresponding text from a book.

COMMENTARY:

The dance teacher will need to practice reading with the videotape as some parts of the text may need to be eliminated or restructured with pauses for the movement. Any professional production of this ballet is suitable on video.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) Students read a paragraph and are given a written list of statements which may or may not convey the general idea of the paragraph. Students are asked to check any sentences which have some connection to the paragraph they read.

(2) Students read a paragraph and are given a written list of statements which may or may not convey the general idea of the paragraph. Students are asked to check those statements which do not adequately represent the ideas in the paragraph they read.**

** Different paragraphs should be used for each activity.

WATCHING - READING 1, WEEK 2**READING 1: Summarize a paragraph****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

Using the same videotape from the previous session, show only clips/segments of the last session's presentation. Show the clips once, then a second time reading only the fragments of the text which coordinate directly with the video clip.

COMMENTARY:

The dance teacher will need to select only those moments from the video which most succinctly define the action taking place. Select only those phrases or sentences from the text which are necessary. Using the counter on the VCR will assist tremendously. Clips should not be longer than thirty seconds.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) Students read a paragraph and are given a written list of three or four statements which all summarize the paragraph. Students are asked to check the one option which best summarizes the paragraph they read.

(2) Students read a paragraph and then write a summary of that paragraph.

The summary should be approximately two to three sentences depending on the length of the paragraph that was read.

WATCHING - READING 2, WEEK 1

READING 2: Developing alternate endings for existing stories

DANCE ACTIVITY:

Students watch a videotape of Paul Taylor's Polaris.

COMMENTARY:

Polaris is a non-narrative dance, but one which excellently demonstrates the concept of alternate solutions for a movement problem. Polaris is in two sections. The choreography for each section is identical, while the music changes. The change of music creates an entirely different mood and emphasis. Before showing the videotape, ask the children to look for the effects caused by the change of music.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

- (1) Students read a short story and are given a list of five possible endings for the same story. Students check off those endings which would not coordinate with the facts introduced in the story. (The possible endings listed should be simple statements of one to two sentences each.)
- (2) Students read a short story and select the most logical and interesting ending for the same story from a list of developed endings. (The list of developed endings should be approximately five sentences each.)

WATCHING - READING 2, WEEK 2**READING 2: Developing alternate endings for existing stories****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

The dance teacher reviews the story of Cinderella with the children. Using a company of dancers, the dance teacher proposes a change in the story: the glass slipper fits one of the stepsister's feet before the prince can try the shoe on Cinderella's foot. The dance company presents three possible endings for the story based on this change.

COMMENTARY:

The dance company needed in this section need not be professional, or have many members. A small local company could fulfill the need, or more advanced students from high schools or colleges could choreograph and perform the new endings. The endings should be limited to three to four minutes each. The children may enjoy voting on their favorite ending after seeing the choices.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

- (1) Students read a short story which has no ending. Students list three possible concepts for the story's ending. (The concepts should be simple statements of one to two sentences each.)
- (2) Students read a short story and write a new ending for the story.

WATCHING - WRITING 1, WEEK 1**WRITING 1: Character description****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

Students watch filmed dance excerpts which concentrate on character development (rather than action). Excerpts from Fancy Free, and Peter and the Wolf are especially appropriate.

COMMENTARY:

The teacher should precede each dance excerpt with a brief introduction or explanation of the plot of the dance. Ask the students to watch closely the movements of a particular character. This allows the students to focus on a singular character and see the movement that describes him or her, rather than trying to absorb a variety of characters. Encourage the children to look for movements which are also in their vocabulary, and to see how those movements are used in context.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

- (1) Students read a paragraph which describes a character. From a list of ten adjectives, students indicate those adjectives which were used in the story to describe the character.
- (2) Students write a list of five adjectives (descriptive words) which describe themselves.

WATCHING - WRITING 1, WEEK 2

WRITING 1: Character description

DANCE ACTIVITY:

Students watch Jose Limon's Moors Pavane.

COMMENTARY:

Introduce the videotape with an explanation of the plot of the dance, as well as an explanation of the characters. Point out to the students that Limon has used particular types of movement to describe each character. Ask the students to watch for the relationship between characters as well. Encourage the children to look for movements which are also in their vocabulary, and to see how those movements are used in context.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

- (1) The class reads aloud a short story (or section of a story) about a particular person. Students write three sentences which describe the main character in the story.
- (2) Students write a paragraph describing a fictional character which they have created.

WATCHING - WRITING 2, WEEK 1

WRITING 2: Relating one character to other characters within a story

DANCE ACTIVITY:

Students watch Agnes de Mille's Rodeo.

COMMENTARY:

Introduce the videotape with an explanation of the plot of the dance, as well as an explanation of the characters. Point out to the students that de Mille has used particular types of movement to describe each character and his relationships to the other characters. Ask the students to watch for the relationship between the tomboy cowgirl and the rancher's daughter, and the attention of the men, especially the Championship Roper. Encourage the children to look for movements which are also in their vocabulary, and to see how those movements are used in context.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) The students read a story and are given a list of characters who appear in the story. Using the list the students identify the characters' relationships to each other. Example:

Directions: Draw a line between the characters in the right column to their relationship to other characters listed in the left column.

Mary	Mr. Smith's boss
Mr. Baker	Mr. Smith's daughter
Emily	Mr. Baker's daughter
Carol	Mary's best friend

(2) Students read a story involving multiple characters. Given a list of characters in the story, the students fill in the character's relationship to others in the story. Example:

Dr. Brown _____ (son of Old Man Brown)

Jane _____ (Dr. Brown's patient)

Mrs. Jones _____ (Jane's mother)

Ann _____ (Jane's baby)

WATCHING - WRITING 2, WEEK 2**WRITING 2: Relating one character to other characters within a story****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

Students watch an abstract, non-narrative dance such as one by Merce Cunningham or Alwin Nikolais.

COMMENTARY:

Introduce the videotape by telling the students that they will not be watching a story-dance, and that the choreographer has not created characters in this piece. Encourage the students to notice how different this abstract no-character piece is from de Mille's Rodeo, and other narrative pieces they have seen.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

- (1) The students read a story and list and identify the relationships of all the characters within the story.
 - (2) Students write a two paragraph story involving two or three characters.
-

The following section contains the lesson plans for Group Three, the "Doing" group. Each of the lessons involves some physical movement activity in the narrative area. For testing purposes each lesson's follow-up activities for Group Three are identical to those for Group Two. Because of the nature of dance activities and the fact that full exploration of a topic may not be possible in the time allotted for one session, several of the following lessons continue over a two-session period. For this reason, the teacher is advised to read at least one lesson ahead of his or her class.

DOING - LISTENING 1, WEEK 1**LISTENING 1: Following the sequential development of a story****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

Students choose an animal they wish to dance about, then choose five things that animal will do in the dance. Students create short solo studies in which they demonstrate the movement characteristics of their animal as well as the five things they have chosen to do. Students should be asked to repeat their studies at least twice to verify that they are performing the same sequence each time.

COMMENTARY:

The dance teacher should take some time at the start of the session to guide the children in a group exploration of animal movement. Have the child move "like a frog, a horse, an elephant" and point out various movement choices specific to each animal (i.e. galloping horse, heavy elephant, etc.) The teacher should assist the children in finding five movement choices if their dance experience is limited, or if they are unusually timid. To save time in a large group, have the students perform their solos for a partner once, then for the class once or twice.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) Students are read a short story aloud and then given a written list of the main events of the story and asked to number (organize) that list ordering the events in sequence. Example:

Directions: The events below are from the story you heard today. Number them 1 to 5 in the order you heard them in the story.

___ the dog ran away

- ___ Tommy opened the gate
- ___ Tommy put up pictures of his dog in the neighborhood
- ___ Mrs. Smith told Tommy to take out the garbage
- ___ Mr. Nelson brought Sparky inside

(2) The teacher reads a story in which the events are given in an illogical, incorrect order. The children order the events correctly by numbering them on paper. Example:

Directions: The events below are listed in the same way that you heard them in the story. Number them 1 to 5 so that the story will be in the right order and make sense. (List events as read aloud.)

DOING - LISTENING 1, WEEK 2

LISTENING 1: Following the sequential development of a story

DANCE ACTIVITY:

Students are asked to spontaneously create shapes for a set of dance terms, such as "bend, stretch, twist, turn, elevate, fall". The teacher says the terms aloud, always in the same sequence, leaving a few seconds for the children to freeze in the appropriate shape. Then, students listen to and execute an extended sequence of actions (five or more) such as, "Run to a place and stop in a twisted shape, stay in that shape as you make a full turn, travel in that shape to a new place, collapse". The instructions are given first, repeated and then executed. The same instructions should be executed at least three times for clarification and improvement before changing to a new sequence.

COMMENTARY: Information contained in Measuring Intelligence by Lewis M. Terman and Maud A. Merrill and reported by Dorothy Rubin, indicates that the norm for children ages seven to nine is repetition of five digits forward and three to four digits in reverse.⁴ Based on that research, each of the above sequences contains no more than six directions. The dance exercise offers many opportunities for extension and development. Sequences can be longer and/or more complex, and directions could be given by student leaders. The movement choices are limited only by imagination, and the child's movement vocabulary. Special attention must be given to choosing movement words which the child understands.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

- (1) The teacher reads a short story aloud and asks the students to determine and list (on paper) the main events in correct sequence.
- (2) Children are asked to write a short story (approximately one paragraph) which contains five events in a logical progression.

DOING - LISTENING 2, WEEK 1

LISTENING 2: Listening for Purpose

DANCE ACTIVITY:

As a group have the children explore making body shapes which represent letters of the alphabet. Direct students to create a name dance, spelling out their names with their bodies. The audience should be encouraged to call out the letters as they see them in each dance, and to repeat the spelling of the name after the dance is over.

COMMENTARY:

Encourage the students to keep moving between letter shapes. Allow a short time for students to create and practice their dances before doing them for the class. Care should be taken to see that students use the entire body to create a letter shape (not just the hands or fingers, as is common with young children).

The dancer should be asked to verbally spell out his/her name before beginning the dance. The dance teacher may structure the group exploration at his/her discretion. If the class is large and time to see solos is a problem, divide the class into three or four groups to watch each other's dances.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) The teacher reads a story, such as Margaret Wise Brown's Where Have You Been? aloud. The students keep track, in tally form, of how many animals are mentioned in the story.

(2) The teacher reads a story to the students which presents the wrong animals making the wrong sounds. For example, a sheep barks, a dog whinnies, etc.

The students are given a sheet with a list of animals on one side and a list of sounds on the other side, such as:

sheep	moo
cow	baa
horse	bark
dog	whinny

The students draw lines connecting the animal and the **INCORRECT** sound it made in the story.

DOING - LISTENING 2, WEEK 2

LISTENING 2: Listening for Purpose

DANCE ACTIVITY:

In groups of four or five, students create short dances which show a comic struggle to board a bus, plane, train, etc. Students are directed to meet at the loading area and progress through various activities (i.e. checking baggage) and bring the dance to some conclusion. Students must have one humorous section somewhere in the dance. After each dance is performed for the class, ask the audience to name the funniest moment and describe what happened.

COMMENTARY:

Allow time for the creation and rehearsal of dances. Remind students that these are short studies and that only a section of the dance is to be humorous. The teacher may have to assist some groups with making movement choices which adequately illustrate their intentions.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) The children listen carefully to this transcript of a phone conversation.

(Read twice.) "The phone rings in the Stewart house. Jane picks up the phone. Mrs. Brown is calling for Jane's mother who is not at home and asks Jane to take a message. 'Please tell your mother that we are meeting at Mrs. Drake's house, not Mrs. Crane's. Also tell her to bring the paper plates, not the cups.'"5

Ask the children to answer these questions:

- 1) Who answered the phone? a) Jane b) Mrs. Stewart c) Mrs. Brown
- 2) Who was calling? a) Jane b) Mrs. Brown c) Mrs. Crane

3) Where is the meeting going to be? a) at Mrs. Brown's b) at Mrs. Drake's c) at Jane's

4) What should Mrs. Stewart bring? a) cups b) plates c) forks

(2) Students listen to one side of a pre-recorded phone conversation (with pauses in place of responses). Play the tape once, then a second time after giving out sheets which have the recorded script and a blank area to write in the responses. Ask the children to fill in the responses.⁶

DOING - SPEAKING 1, WEEK 1

SPEAKING 1: Describe an event aloud

DANCE ACTIVITY:

The dance teacher describes a scenario which has four or five separate events or activities. For example, "I am waiting alone on the corner. A young woman approaches. I ignore her but then realize that she is my cousin from Florida. We are excited to see each other." In small groups the students create a short dance which presents this event to the audience.

COMMENTARY:

The dance teacher should develop a different scenario for each of the groups and after each dance the audience can describe what they saw. In many cases the audience will not be able to relate the real specifics of what was danced (e.g. they would not know that the young woman was a cousin, but they would likely glean that she is someone who the dancer knows and likes), but they should be encouraged to piece together some story line from what they observed.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

- (1) The students recite a simple nursery rhyme or poem aloud.
- (2) The teacher tells/reads a well known fairy tale aloud stopping before the end of the story. Children are asked to create and tell (aloud) a different ending. For larger classes, the teacher should be prepared with several fairy tales.

DOING - SPEAKING 1, WEEK 2**SPEAKING 1: Describe an event aloud****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

The dance teacher suggests several events to the class, such as: going to a play, a birthday party, a hold up, a wedding. Student groups select an event, develop a simple story line, and create a shape dance to describe the activities. Students could have up to fifteen shapes in the dance. Groups may use a narrator if they wish.

COMMENTARY:

The shape dance is likened to watching a slide show. Each group member decides on a shape representing a particular part of the event, and/or a certain character at the event. The shapes are presented in sequence (more than one dancer can be in each slide) to describe the event.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) Students build a story. With the class sitting in a circle, the teacher creates the first line of a story. Each student adds one sentence to the story, being careful to agree with what has come before, until one student decides the story is complete and says, "the end".

(2) Students are asked to describe for the class an event in which they have been involved. The teacher should prompt students with suggestions such as, "tell us what you did on your last birthday!".

DOING - SPEAKING 2, WEEK 1**SPEAKING 2: State the main idea of a paragraph****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

In small groups students create a short narrative dance around a central idea. For example, the central idea may be a diving expedition. Groups create dances up to one minute detailing any aspect of the expedition, such as: the diving sequence, sea creatures met, movement of water. The dance teacher directs the group to develop a central focus for the dance. The dancers must choose to focus on the creatures, or the action of diving, etc. The group selects one dancer to narrate the movement using action or descriptive words. The group decides in advance what the narrator will say.

COMMENTARY:

Allow ample time for selection of topic and central focus. The teacher needs to be certain that all dancers are involved in creating movement and deciding what the narrator will say. Promote attention to focus and advise groups if they are straying from their stated focus.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

- (1) The students read a paragraph from a book aloud.
 - (2) The teacher reads a paragraph aloud and the students are asked to select the main idea of the paragraph from a list of possibilities on the blackboard.
- The students raise hands and answer aloud.

DOING - SPEAKING 2, WEEK 2**SPEAKING 2: State the main idea of a paragraph****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

Arrange the students shoulder to shoulder in a circle. Tell the students that the focus/goal of the following movement activity is to reach the other side of the circle. The dancers may use any locomotor movement to travel, but all must move in slow motion. All students participate at the same time, causing a great traffic problem. When a dancer comes within arms reach of another dancer, both dancers must freeze in a shape for four counts. Dancers who reach the other side of the circle freeze upon arrival.

COMMENTARY:

The dance teacher beats out a slow four rhythm during this exercise and continually reminds students to focus on the main goal -- reaching the other side. Remind dancers that if they focus on travelling, and stay clear of others, they will reach the goal successfully. Judging by the size of the dance space the teacher should determine the average number of beats necessary to get across the circle. The teacher should count out this number of beats and stop playing. Those dancers who have not reached the goal by this point will start from their current locations in the next round. (No one is "out".) Subsequent rounds could be played moving backwards, on all fours, etc.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) The teacher reads a paragraph aloud and students are asked to state the main idea of the paragraph. The students raise hands and answer aloud.

(2) Students write a paragraph elaborating upon a main idea. The students state the main idea of their paragraph in a sentence at the bottom of the page. Students read these paragraphs aloud to the class.

DOING - READING 1, WEEK 1

READING 1: Summarize a paragraph

DANCE ACTIVITY:

In groups of four to five dancers, students create a study about a trip to a place where items are purchased, for example: the ice cream store, the grocery store, the pet shop. These short dances are performed for the class.

COMMENTARY:

Direct the students to choose approximately five main actions for their study and remind them to continue to use their basic movement vocabulary (bend, stretch, gallop, etc.) to create the piece. This reminder will help restrict the use of simple pantomime. Allow ample time for rehearsal as these dances will be used for the next session's activity as well. After each dance the audience will enjoy guessing what location the group selected, as well as what transpired there.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) Students read a paragraph and are given a written list of statements which may or may not convey the general idea of the paragraph. Students are asked to check any sentences which have some connection to the paragraph they read.

(2) Students read a paragraph and are given a written list of statements which may or may not convey the general idea of the paragraph. Students are asked to check those statements which do not adequately represent the ideas in the paragraph they read.**

** Different paragraphs should be used for each activity.

DOING - READING 1, WEEK 2**READING 1: Summarize a paragraph****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

Using the dance created in the last session, the students are asked to distill the dance to one half of its previous length. Students must remove and/or refine movements, not increase their speed.

COMMENTARY:

The dances need not be exactly one half as long, but this is an effective guideline and a clear way to present the exercise to the children. Remind the students that the intent of the dance must remain clear after they have made their cuts. Encourage them to select the phrases which give the most information in the least movement.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

- (1) Students read a paragraph and are given a written list of three or four statements which all summarize the paragraph. Students are asked to check the one option which best summarizes the paragraph they read.
- (2) Students read a paragraph and then write a summary of that paragraph. The summary should be approximately two to three sentences depending on the length of the paragraph that was read.

DOING - READING 2, WEEK 1**READING 2: Developing alternate endings for existing stories****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

In groups of four, students create short dances which tell a simple story. For example, the story could detail the events of a shopping trip, culminating in the purchase of an item. The students create and perform these dances for the class.

COMMENTARY:

This exercise will be extended in the next session so the teacher should give the students ample time to prepare and review their dances so that they will remember them. Have the students limit the dances to the abstraction of three to four major events in the story, and encourage them to create a clear and concise ending. Continue to guide students away from using direct pantomime.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) Students read a short story and are given a list of five possible endings for the same story. Students check off those endings which would not coordinate with the facts introduced in the story. (The possible endings listed should be simple statements of one to two sentences each.)

(2) Students read a short story and select the most logical and interesting ending for the same story from a list of developed endings. (The list of developed endings should be approximately five sentences each.)

DOING - READING 2, WEEK 2**READING 2: Developing alternate endings for existing stories****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

Using the dances composed in the last session, ask the entire class to participate in suggesting a different ending for each of the dances presented by the groups. When each group has heard the alternate suggestions, and has decided on a new ending, ask the groups to work on their own to develop and choreograph the new ending. Present the new dances to the class.

COMMENTARY:

Keep the class discussion to a minimum when suggesting alternate endings. This will allow greater working time for the small groups. If groups are having difficulty choosing a new ending, the teacher may need to assist them with making the choice. Class discussion after the new dances are shown is optional and should be done only if there is extra time in the session.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

- (1) Students read a short story which has no ending. Students list three possible concepts for the story's ending. (The concepts should be simple statements of one to two sentences each.)
- (2) Students read a short story and write a new ending for the story.

DOING - WRITING 1, WEEK 1**WRITING 1: Character description****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

Students create short solo movement studies which concentrate on the portrayal of an emotion (sad, surprised, happy, shocked, angry, etc). The study must cover space, and show changes in level and rhythm. The studies are performed for the class.

COMMENTARY:

If the class is large, students may have to divide into smaller groups and perform solos for the group. Encourage the students to portray their emotion through abstracted movement, not through pantomime. Remind the students to work from their basic movement vocabulary to create the study.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) Students read a paragraph which describes a character. From a list of ten adjectives, students indicate those adjectives which were used in the paragraph to describe the character.

(2) Students write a list of five adjectives (descriptive words) which describe themselves.

DOING - WRITING 1, WEEK 2**WRITING 1: Character description****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

Students write movement vocabulary on slips of paper. On other slips of paper students write attitudes or emotions. The slips are tossed in two large bags and each student blindly chooses three slips from the movement bag and one slip from the attitude/emotion bag. Using the movements named on the chosen slips the student creates a short solo study about a character who has the chosen emotion or attitude. The solos are performed for the class.

COMMENTARY:

Movement vocabulary words may include: bend, stretch, gallop, twist, leap, walk, etc. Attitudes/emotions may include: snobby, silly, playful, happy, nosy, angry, etc. Encourage the students to write as many slips as they can in a five minute period. If the class is large, have the students divide into groups to watch each other's solos.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) The class reads aloud a short story (or section of a story) about a particular person. Students write three sentences which describe the main character in the story.

(2) Students write a paragraph describing a fictional character which they have created.

DOING - WRITING 2, WEEK 1

WRITING 2: Relating one character to other characters within a story

DANCE ACTIVITY:

Working in pairs, ask the students to develop shape studies which show a relationship between two characters. Through the shapes the students show both relationship as well as progression of a simple story line. (i.e. the students show two characters who are friends playing with an object. The characters struggle over possession of the object and one character "wins".)

COMMENTARY:

Suggest that the students use approximately ten shapes to create the study. Remind the students to abstract the emotion and relationship between the characters to movement rather than pantomime. During this session, the teacher should move around the room checking and guiding each pair's progress. Allow sufficient rehearsal time as this exercise is continued in the next session. The studies will be performed for the class next week.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

(1) The students read a story and are given a list of characters who appear in the story. Using the list the students identify the characters' relationships to each other. Example:

Directions: Draw a line between the characters in the right column to their relationship to other characters listed in the left column.

Mary	Mr. Smith's boss
Mr. Baker	Mr. Smith's daughter
Emily	Mr. Baker's daughter

Carol Mary's best friend

(2) Students read a story involving multiple characters. Given a list of characters in the story, the students fill in the character's relationship to others in the story. Example:

Dr. Brown _____ (son of Old Man Brown)

Jane _____ (Dr. Brown's patient)

Mrs. Jones _____ (Jane's mother)

Ann _____ (Jane's baby)

DOING - WRITING 2, WEEK 2**WRITING 2: Relating one character to other characters within a story****DANCE ACTIVITY:**

Using the shape studies begun in the last session, the students add locomotor movements to offer continuity between shapes and to develop the story line and expand the relationship between the characters. The studies are performed for the class.

COMMENTARY:

Ask the students to connect their ten shapes with some basic locomotor movements. Stress that the relationship between the characters and the progression of the narrative remains the focus, and that the locomotor movements should only enhance what is already present. Most of the time in this session is allotted for rehearsal. At the end of class, have the students perform the studies.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY:

- (1) The students read a story and list and identify the relationships of all the characters within the story.
- (2) Students write a two paragraph story involving two or three characters.

Notes

¹ Dorothy Rubin, Teaching Elementary Language Arts, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985) 78.

² Dorothy Rubin, The Primary Grade Teacher's Language Arts Handbook (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980) 76.

³ James Flood and Diane Lapp, Language/Reading Instruction for the Young Child (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1981) 155.

⁴ Rubin, Teaching 78.

⁵ Rubin, Primary 76.

⁶ Flood 155.

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