

KINDER/CARING: EXPLORING THE USE AND EFFECTS OF SOCIODRAMA IN
A KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

BY

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Abstract

In this a/r/tographic inquiry I explore how eleven Senior Kindergarten students experience sociodramatic activities based upon Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed and Aesthetics of the Oppressed work (1985, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006). In the role of a/r/tographer and using my skills as a dramatist, I artistically planned each of the twelve workshops, trained the participating teacher to lead students within the dramatic structure and activities, observed individual and collective student artistic inter/actions within and responses to the drama, recorded the facets of art that the kindergarten children chose to create within the sociodrama using various forms of text, and represented my observations using narrative.

Arts-based methods for data collection included a teacher personal reflection journal, an artist-teacher-researcher reflexive journal, teacher interviews (prior to and at the conclusion of the implementation of the twelve sociodrama workshops), personal correspondence between the teacher and artist-researcher-teacher (including telephone conversations, email, and personal communications), and visual and oral representations by students as observed in sociodramatic workshops.

In addition to exploring individual and collective student experiences through first and third person narrative, a description and analysis of the ten themes emerging from my observations of the workshops and an analysis of the data was discussed. These themes included sociodrama appeared possible with this class of students, some difficulties emerged when implementing the sociodrama with these young children, the teacher's role facilitating the sociodrama went beyond that of the traditional joker role in Theatre of the Oppressed, moments of empathy and care were observed occurring within the drama, the

traditional structure of this particular classroom appeared to limit the full sociodramatic possibility, students appeared able to consistently find solutions to concerns within the drama, different levels of student participation and commitment to the sociodrama were observed, leadership roles within students emerged, reoccurring students themes emerged in the sociodrama, and students appeared to experiment with different societal roles.

In loving memory of Donald A. MacTavish

Whose interest in and support for my early childhood accomplishments have influenced
my life more than he'll ever know.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband, Trevor McLennan, for his unwavering support, love and encouragement throughout my doctoral journey. I could not have achieved this life long goal without you! To my daughter, Cadence Sage, thank you for being such a wonderful baby girl! I hope that I can one day support you in your own quest for higher education. I love you both so very much!

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One of my most memorable doctoral courses was Core Seminar 2: Research, Theories, and Issues. Dr. Fiona Blaikie was one of the professors who taught me in this class. I was so pleased when Dr. Blaikie accepted an offer to participate as one of my dissertation committee members. Dr. Blaikie is an incredibly talented artist and researcher in the field of art education and her vast knowledge of this area added greatly to this dissertation research.

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It was an honour to have Dr. Ardra Cole as my external examiner. Dr. Cole's vast experience in and depth of knowledge regarding the use of a/r/tography in educational research made the oral defense of this project incredibly exciting and

enlightening for me. Thank you for a rich discussion that allowed me to reflect deeply upon my doctoral experiences and think ahead to my future scholarly pursuits.

To my parents, Antoinette and Ernest Pecaski, I could not have accomplished this dissertation without your unwavering support and faith. The hours you have spent examining my writing and research and offering advice and encouragement for my academic pursuits have been appreciated more than you know. Thank you for always encouraging me to follow my dreams. I am the person I am today because of the amazing childhood experiences you provided.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

“Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.” (Shaul, 2003, p.34)

Introduction

From the early curriculum theorists to current policy makers the quest of defining what knowledge is important for students to learn, and how students learn best, has long been contested (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 2000). Educational environments appear to function as “factories” that work to produce “a servile labour force, a harmless elector, and a mindless consumer” (Langen, 2004, p.22). In the current age of academic rigor, standards and accountability, the psychological needs of students are sometimes neglected and the fostering of caring relationships in the classroom may not always be a priority (Aina, 1998; Aronson, 2004; Garcia, 1999; Grumet, 1988; Intrator, 2005; Noddings, 1984, 1995). Students often are subjected to oppressive, Eurocentric descriptions of “best” or “developmentally appropriate practice” which are not necessarily representative of their needs (Diaz Soto & Swadener, 2002, p.40). The individuality of students becomes lost when each is expected to *fit* into a quantifiable, homogeneous description of what it means to be knowledgeable and compliant. Educational environments should exist as places that nurture and celebrate student individuality as preparation for a lifetime of learning and existing cooperatively in a complex society (Cook-Sather, 2002; Freire, 1970) and provide opportunities for individual and collective artistic inquiry, experience, and reflection (de Cosson & Irwin, 2004; Irwin, 2003).

Theatre arts, especially sociodrama, has often been used to examine participants' individual and collective social problems through dramatic methods (Creekmore & Madan, 1981; Eckloff, 2006; Lambie, Robson, & Simmonds, 1997; Riley, 1990; Rosenthal & Tetel-Hanks, 1981; Sime & Lee, 1998; Stein, Ingersoll, & Treadwell, 1995; Torrance, 1975; Trzinski & Higgins, 2001; Zachariah & Moreno, 2006). This demonstration reveals that using sociodrama as a means for exploring issues of student importance in the kindergarten classroom makes it possible to celebrate the individuality of educators and students, and to create caring and nurturing relationships. As well, sociodrama challenges the current repressive state of education (Finley, 2005; Gay & Hanley, 1999) during perhaps one of the most meaningful school experiences for a child - *kindergarten* (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2001).

My Personal Background

From the moment I was introduced to the techniques and philosophies of sociodrama (Boal, 1985, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006; Pecaski McLennan, 2003; Pecaski McLennan & Smith, 2007; Moreno, 1973) I have been fascinated with how they might be integrated into a regular educational setting to promote social change within students and educators. Throughout my undergraduate degrees in drama and education, I explored how educators might use aspects of sociodrama (for example theatre games, image theatre, forum theatre) in their classrooms. I wondered whether via drama teachers might be able to engage students in empowering activities while fulfilling the arts curriculum.

According to Piirto (2002) in order for research to be truly arts-based, artistic researchers must be highly qualified and skilled in their artistic area of inquiry including expertise through undergraduate degrees and extensive performances. I believe that my

intensive undergraduate experiences in theatre and performance have provided me with the artistic qualifications essential for participation in artistic inquiry. As a highly qualified dramatist I have developed extensive knowledge, appreciation, and a deep love for theatre and dramatic arts through my personal, professional, and scholarly endeavours.

During my Master of Education I continued my investigations into the use of drama in education and became involved in a ten-week study that incorporated aspects of Boal's (1985, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006) Theatre of the Oppressed techniques into a grade eight classroom to examine whether student concept of self changed as a result of the drama lessons (Pecaski McLennan, 2003). Multiple themes emerged and it was revealed that the Theatre of the Oppressed activities appeared to promote both positive and negative changes in student self-concept (Pecaski McLennan & Smith, 2007). Fascinated by the results of this study coupled with the experiences of my Master of Education, I decided to pursue doctoral work.

My experiences in my doctoral program have opened my mind to numerous theories and philosophies including critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970), hegemony in early elementary education (Cook-Sather, 2002; Diaz Soto & Swadener, 2002), and empathy and care (Eisler & Levine, 2002; Noddings, 1984, 1995, 1996, 1999). These theories enhance continued reflection on my practices as an educator and arts-based researcher, and how they can be incorporated into classrooms. In particular, through much reading and self-reflection, I realize that, as an educator, I have sometimes succumbed to the pressures of academic standards and accountability prescribed by administration even though these classroom practices might not always represent student needs and interests

or my personal teaching philosophies. This dis/connect between what I have been exploring in doctoral studies and experiencing in my educational practices has placed me in an “in-between space” (Irwin, 2003, p.64) where I have begun to expand, explore, layer, dis/re/connect my prior assumptions and pre-existing notions of art and education. I am questioning my assumed identities as an artist, researcher, and teacher.

During one of my second-year doctoral courses, I studied theories of empathy and care via three lenses: cognition and learning, policies of leadership, and social/cultural/political frameworks. Much of what I read indicated that people might become more caring and empathetic towards others through a supportive environment that encourages repetitive, caring and empathetic behaviours (Eisler & Levine, 2002; Noddings, 1996). In addition to being a doctoral student, I was also teaching an incredibly difficult Senior Kindergarten class in a very culturally diverse, inner-city school in Southern Ontario. Through much exploration of literature and self-reflection I observed that students were most responsive and receptive to activities and lessons in our classroom that were liberatory, arts-based, play-based and that provided them with choices and control. These activities and lessons empowered them and appeared to allow them the opportunity to know and understand in arts-based ways. As a result of examining current literature and my experiences in our kindergarten classroom as an a/r/tographer who has begun to “re-think, re-live, and re-make” (Irwin, 2004, p.27) the essence of my identity, I began to question whether I might be able to implement activities into classrooms that would encourage the artistic individuality of students among all members of a classroom through the use of sociodrama activities. In particular,

could students explore collective issues of importance using the domains of kindergarten pedagogy and social drama? (Piiro, 2002)

As I embark on the final journey of my doctoral degree, the dissertation, I am again experiencing transformation in my life – I am a student, teacher, artist, educator, and now a mother too: once again I have been given the gift of being able to experience the world through a different lens; this time through parenthood. A/r/tography reminds those who balance multiple identities as a/r/tographers that they live lives of “awareness [and] openness to the complexity around us” (Pinar, 2004, p.33) through an evolution of aesthetic questioning, practice, reflection, representation, performance and re-questioning. I look forward to continuing my journey and exploring all “four directions: inward and outward, backward and forward” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p.417) in my personal-professional-scholarly life.

Purpose of the Study

This a/r/tography examines the effects of twelve sociodrama workshops on one Senior Kindergarten class of students and their teacher. In particular, I as artist/researcher/teacher examine how Senior Kindergarten students experience sociodrama activities and what issues and themes emerge from within the sociodrama workshops.

Sociodrama is a form of interactive theatre originally conceptualized by Moreno (1943) and Boal (1985, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006) for use with oppressed members of society. In this form of theatre, audience members interact with actors on stage by suggesting changes in the dramatic action, immediately resulting in spontaneous improvisation to the societal problems being explored by the actors. The constant state of

dialogue that exists between the audience members and actors allows them to represent, explore and reflect upon issues of social importance. Sociodrama has been used by diverse societal groups to raise self-esteem and self-awareness in order to examine issues such as poverty, loneliness, racism, sexism, political oppression, and aging (Grieco & Chambliss, 2001; Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994).

Sociodrama has been used successfully with actors, political activists, therapists and social workers to address issues requiring personal and social change (Schutzman & Cohen Cruz, 1994). Although many artists and educators in the older grades have used sociodrama with students, an extensive review of the literature suggested that there was a need for research to be conducted with Senior Kindergarten students regarding the use of sociodrama activities in the classroom. There were no studies found exploring this issue (Amantruda, 2006).

This study explores how kindergarten students engaging in sociodramatic activities based on the work of Boal (1985, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006) affect individual and social change. This study explores possibilities for engaging Senior Kindergarten students in artistic activities originally intended for use with politically oppressed, adult members of society. It explores whether students are able to collectively decide on themes and issues to explore within the dramatic workshops as well as suggest alternative actions and responses for these concerns. This study explores the implementation of sociodrama into a classroom as a paradigm for students to explore, represent, and reflect upon individual and collective societal issues from a teacher, researcher, and artistic perspective. It encourages the active participation of the researcher, teacher, and students in the process of the sociodramatic research (Springgay, Irwin, & Wilson Kind, 2005).

Using modified activities outlined in the sociodramatic work of Boal (1985, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006) including aspects of Theatre of the Oppressed and Aesthetics of the Oppressed as well as expectations outlined in the Ministry of Education (2006) curriculum document for kindergarten, the twelve sociodrama workshops were designed to provide multiple opportunities for students to artistically examine, enact, role-play and reflect upon issues, themes, and ideas of personal and collective importance. Qualitative data was collected continuously including a reflexive journal, field notes from workshop observations, teacher reflection journal and teacher interviews (see Appendix A and Appendix F) in order to explore the effects and transference of issues and themes resulting from work within twelve sociodrama workshops.

Definition of Terms

A/r/tography: For the purposes of this study, a/r/tography is defined as an artistic inquiry through the process of sociodrama and creating text, while acknowledging one's role as artist, researcher, and teacher. The sociodrama and text are interwoven in order to allow additional or enhanced meanings and understandings from the sociodramatic workshops to emerge (Sinner, 2002). In this study, the ongoing reflexive journaling has been woven with observations of the sociodrama workshops in an effort to artistically explore and represent the observed moments within the dramas.

Commitment to Drama: For the purposes of this study, "student commitment" to drama is defined as a student participating actively in all aspects of the workshops including warm-ups, sociodrama activities, and discussion and reflection periods. Due to the interactive nature of sociodrama, students who were actively observing drama and asking questions or making suggestions for alternative dramatic action as audience members, or spectactors, are considered participants.

Forum Theatre: Forum theatre is a Theatre of the Oppressed sociodrama technique created by Boal (1992) that involves the enactment and reenactment of a scene in which participants dramatize issues of social concern. Participants first brainstorm issues or events of personal or collective importance. These situations are then acted out as they occurred. Spectators (renamed spectactors in Theatre of the Oppressed) are invited by the teacher (or group leader) to suggest and improvise alternative endings so the conflict or situation can be explored and potentially resolved (Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994).

Reflection: Reflection refers to a metacognitive activity (for example oral discussion, pictorial or textual entries in a journal) “designed to promote the children’s awareness of their thinking, learning and meaning-making processes” (Crumpler, 2003, p.19, 20)

Sociodrama: Sociodrama is a form of interactive drama that engages people in specific dramatic activities (including warm-ups, games, main activities, reflection) in order to evoke discussions, explorations and role-playing of solutions to issues and group conflicts (Kellerman, 1998). It encompasses: active student participation in the selection of a group theme or issue to explore in the sociodrama activities, active student participation in the enactment of role-plays, games, or drama exercises, active student participation in the re-enactment of solutions to role-plays, games, or drama exercises according to the format followed in Theatre of the Oppressed and Aesthetics of the Oppressed sociodrama work (Boal, 1985, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006; Moreno, 1973), active audience participation as spectactors (Boal, 1985) including active listening and responding

to the sociodrama activities and participation in the drama, and active oral reflection in group discussions

Workshops: This study consists of twelve, forty-minute periods of time where Senior Kindergarten students engaged in sociodramatic activities. Each forty-minute period of time is referred to as a workshop instead of a lesson or circle. This is because I wish to distinguish the sociodramatic workshops from the formalized, structured lessons currently in place in today's schools that are guided by mandated curriculum expectations and assessment. Although multiple Ontario curriculum expectations are fulfilled through the implementation of the twelve sociodrama workshops, students were ultimately guiding the exploration of the sociodramatic activities making the workshops liberatory, student-centered, and authentic.

A/r/tography

A/r/tography is a form of qualitative, arts-based, living inquiry (Springgay, Irwin, & Wilson Woods, 2005) that encourages its participants to become engaged. Recent scholars have described arts production and presentation to be scholarly investigations and representations where new courses of action unfold due to "loss, shift or rupture" resulting in new ideas and information emerging:

Loss, shift and rupture are foundational concepts or metonyms for a/r/tography. They create openings, they displace meaning, and they allow for slippages. Loss, shift and rupture create presence through absence, they become tactile, felt and seen. (Springgay, Irwin, Wilson Woods, 2005, p.898)

Loss, shift and rupture allow a/r/tographers to become aware of the “third space”, a place where they can “re-[think], re-[live], and re-[make] the terms of their identities as they confront difference and similarity in apparently contradictory world” (Irwin, 2004, p. 29; Rogoff, 2000). A/r/tographic research provides an opportunity for the two domains of theatrical and educational research to be equally explored. The artistic knowledge is demonstrated in the artistic domain (sociodrama) while theoretical knowledge of educational theory (kindergarten pedagogy) is also explored (Piirto, 2002).

When describing the essence of a/r/tography, Irwin (2004) asks us to consider three forms of thought: knowing, doing, and making. Irwin (2004) refers to this as a “metissage” or “language” that helps us to see the spaces that exist between “artist, researcher, and teacher” (p.9). A/r/tography is about using aesthetic, artistic experience and text in order to explore. This merging together of thought and action help us to creatively engage with others and within ourselves (Pinar, 2004). Irwin (2004) states:

A/r/tography is a form of representation that privileges both text and image as they meet within moments of metissage. But most of all, a/r/tography is about each of us living a life of deep meaning through perceptual practices that reveal what was once hidden, create what has never been known, and imagine what we hope to achieve. Art-making, researching, and teaching become activities that weave and wind through, in and around one another.

Irwin refers to this “interweaving and intraweaving of concepts, activities and feelings” as the “fabrics of similarity and difference” which allow the a/r/tographer to exist in a “third space...re-thinking, re-living, and re-making” their identities and understandings as a/r/tographers (p.28).

A/r/tographers immerse themselves in “a collection of ideas, information, and artifacts” in order to “imagine and form different relationships amongst people and ideas” (Irwin, 2004, p.32). These inter/actions allow the a/r/tographer to delve deeply into the world of art, education, and research in order to explore the known, unknown, and imaginable. Creating art and education is not something that is done. It is lived experience. It is not rehearsal for or representation of reality, but reality itself.

Irwin (2004) states that a/r/tographers are continuously exploring how to collect, present and represent educational inquiry. Questions and understandings are represented through texts and artwork in an effort to convey meaning and not facts about the a/r/tographer’s exploration. A/r/tography is a never-ending continuity of exploration. “Thought and action are inextricably linked, and through a hermeneutic circle of interpretation and understanding, new knowledge affects existing knowledge that in turn affects the freshly conceived existing knowledge” (Irwin, 2004, p.34). Because a/r/tography is living work, representing an a/r/tographer’s questions, practices, understandings and texts is challenging. How can one best represent the meaning, and not the facts, behind the a/r/tographic exploration? This appears to be especially challenging for the dramatists unless they are video/audiotaped, dramatic moments disappear the moment they are conceived and acted upon, existing only in memory after the experience. Unlike visual artists who have a piece of tangible artwork, dramatic moments have the potential to become lost or misrepresented. The quest becomes how these dramatic moments can be represented in an accessible way so that a non-observer might still be able to imagine what happened in the artistic activities.

Much like a/r/tography (Finley, 2005; Irwin, 2004; Irwin and de Cosson, 2004) seeks to “encourage audiences to define themselves not as passive spectators but rather as active participants” (p.684) the sociodramatic theories of Boal (1985, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006) when used in educational environments seek to “create an educational culture that empowers students” (Howard, 2004, p.217) by encouraging them to think critically, to analyze their own social conditions, and to evaluate information presented to them related to their own power, identity, and representation (Howard, 2004; Trend, 1992). These educational “spaces” need to be experienced as “vibrant, living, creative spaces providing opportunities for dialogue and growth (Haskell & Linds, 2004, website) that challenge both students and teachers to transform their “taken-for-granted, naturalized understandings of knowledge, teaching, and the school” (Pinar, 2004, p.23). These same educational contexts may also be used to help facilitate caring and empathetic relationships between individuals existing and interacting with one another (Noddings, 1996; Eisler & Levine, 2002; Levine, 2002) through exposure to and the repetitive experiencing of compassionate and altruistic interactions among students. Noddings (1984, 1995, 1996, 1999) suggests that one of the purposes of educational environments should be the creation and sustenance of caring and arts- appreciating individuals.

A/r/tography seeks to unite theory and practice as it “portrays the multidimensionality of human life” (Finley, 2005, p.683). Because “sociodrama can be adapted to any age group” (Zachariah & Moreno, 2006, p.161), “early experiences literally provide the organizing framework for our brains” (Eisler & Levine, 2002, p.18), and “the brain is malleable all throughout life, but much more so in the early years” (Eisler & Levine, 2002, p.20) this study seeks to explore how sociodrama activities are

experienced by Senior Kindergarten students. What is my role as an a/r/tographer in the implementation of the sociodrama workshops? The issues and themes that emerge from the sociodrama throughout twelve workshops will also be explored in depth. According to Boal (2006) “theatre is the most natural form of learning, and the most primal, since the child learns to live by means of theatre, playing, acting characters – and, through the other arts, looking at himself and painting, singing and dancing” (p.37).

Research Questions

The following were the research questions:

How do Senior Kindergarten children experience sociodrama activities?

What themes emerge from a four-week sociodrama workshop with Senior Kindergarten students?

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

“In direct opposition to the current emphasis on academic standards, a national curriculum, and national assessment, I have argued that our main educational aim should be to encourage the growth of competent, caring, loving, and lovable people.”
(Noddings, 1995, p.366)

Introduction

The literature review focuses on the use of drama in schools, sociodrama in education, theatre of the oppressed in education, and theories of empathy and care in education.

Drama

Drama has been described as a method of allowing individuals to experience many things including dimensions of the human condition such as “joy, pain, sorrow, celebration, conflict or irony” (Gay, 1999, p.20). According to Way (1967), drama is a rich and living art form, which engrosses its participants in many absorbing occurrences. Drama is concerned with the uniqueness of individuals. Dramatic context allows participants to truly express themselves in ways they normally might not. A safe environment is created through drama where participants can explore issues, feelings, and situations they normally might not encounter in their real life. Role-playing allows people the opportunity to develop their self-concept by taking risks and exploring issues important to them. The art form of drama is concerned with the development and expression of individuals and this results in the growth and maturation of its actors. The many exercises and activities of drama provide a forum for shared communication and adventures. These exercises are attainable by all who attempt them. In therapeutic and educational drama, all people are able to perform and engage in drama. This interaction of people allows for the sharing of ideas and emotions, which results in a better

appreciation for one's self and one's peers. The use of drama is effective in facilitating personal growth and expression of individuality because drama allows people to begin from whatever growth stage they are at, and work toward bettering themselves in many different areas (Way, 1967).

The Benefits of Incorporating Drama into the Classroom

A two-year research project by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts found that students who participated in a comprehensive arts program acquired many benefits (Garcia, 1993). These students were able to make decisions, build self-esteem and self-discipline, and acquire skills in cooperation and group problem solving. In this study, drama was a subject that was incorporated more significantly into the normal activities of the classroom and became an alternative to the traditional paper and pencil method of responding to new information. Drama also was used as a way for students to respond to new ideas and information shared within the classroom. The key implication of this research is that drama allowed students the opportunity to explore their own ideas and present these ideas to peers. According to Cooper (2005) "dramatization is a powerful motivator in the learning process" (p.246) often inviting students to become more involved in classroom activities than more traditional ones such as pencil and paper tasks.

Another study, undertaken by a group of elementary teachers over the course of four years, examined the effectiveness and implications of using drama in the classroom on a consistent basis (Somers, 1996). Data were collected using an attitude questionnaire as well as a social distance scale that measured how physically close students would get to one another. Somers concluded that when students became involved in dramatic activities, they were engrossed in many learning situations. Learning involved studying

components of the curriculum as well as developing personal growth and knowledge through self-exploration. Drama allowed students opportunities to create and explore specific situations, allowing students to become more familiar with items and issues in their immediate environment. This knowledge empowered students, which increased self-knowledge and self-concept. Students who engaged in drama also learned to interact with each other on a more effective, consistent basis. This resulted in increased group cooperation and collaboration. All of these factors aided in increasing the positive atmosphere in the classroom and as a result, students felt more positively about themselves and their peers.

Widdows (1996) states that the drama techniques of role-playing and forum theatre aid in the psychological health of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Through the use of drama, students build the confidence to take risks and fully engage themselves in their work. The dramatic structure allows students to feel connected to fellow actors (peers) because the individual actor's personal and sociological interactions are essential elements that allow the drama to occur and continue in a productive manner. Students involved in drama are encouraged to work together. Successful drama is a positive result of the cooperation and energy expressed by the students involved. According to Widdows (1996), long term dramatic activities result in students becoming more sensitive, committed, confident, assertive, eager to learn, and positive. All of these qualities help to increase student self-concept.

Drama and theatre are valuable tools for revising girls' negative self-images (Lanoux & O'Hara, 1999). According to Lanoux and O'Hara, (1999) positive self-images in pre-adolescent girls emerge from those based on images dictated from culture as the

norm through the use of creative activities that focus on embracing individual differences. These activities can help pre-adolescent girls, age eight to eleven, to find their own voices and bring them into their own power. Safe drama activities provide an outlet for girls to begin building their confidence and get in touch with their true selves.

Al-Saadat and Afifi (1997) conclude that drama activities and role-playing can be used as psychological aids to foster self-confidence in inhibited and passive students in the classroom. Students who belong to families in paternal communities tend to be inhibited in the presence of elders, including teachers. This passiveness usually affects class participation and behaviour. Role-playing activities can be used to help students develop their speaking and communication skills in the classroom and help promote student motivation. Drama activities allow students to experience the reward of being an active part of real language communication.

While engaging first grade students in readers theatre activities Larkin (2001) discovered that the more students participated in drama, the more organized, eager to assist others, and enthusiastic about personal learning they became. The dramatic activities promote students listening more attentively and expressing their thoughts more clearly to one another. After students had participated in several dramatic workshops, Larkin observed that students' scores on story retelling sheets improved, written retellings of the stories read were much more detailed, and they appeared to have deeper and clearer insights into the stories.

According to Klein (1998) teachers who utilize drama as a tool for student learning must skirt the tendency to be "drama leader[s]" (p.19) who direct every moment of student activity, and endeavour to be "improvisational learners who guide children"

(p.19) in their own dramatic play and exploration. In this process, students are encouraged to direct and act their own dramas without a pre-planned lesson from the teacher. This results in student empowerment within the drama. Klein calls for educators to stop “controlling and manipulating children’s dramas with adult-structured ‘lesson’ plans...[and instead] get out of their way and watch and listen to their subtexts” (p.17). By doing so the true nature of adult-child relationships may be revealed in the form of dramatic metaphors, created by and for children engaging in personally meaningful drama.

Following a two-year study, Berry (1998) concluded that at-risk children appeared to engage more successfully in arts-based learning opportunities such as role-playing than traditional educational approaches including paper and pencil activities. Berry (1998) explains that this may be because young children learn best through experiences in “sight, touch, movement, sound and taste” (p.28). Arts, including drama, provide children with opportunities to engage and learn through these five senses, enriching their understandings of themselves and the world around them. Berry (1998) further contends “art helps children consider multiple perspectives, understand that there can be many ways to solve problems and provide answers, and learn to make choices from these possibilities” (p.28). Students, who engage in arts-based learning activities including drama, use their imagination to solve problems, invent, and take risks in their learning.

Sociodrama

Moreno (1943) conceptualizes sociodrama as a way of combining sociometry with drama techniques to create an effective and meaningful tool of social change.

Sociometry examines the patterns of how individuals associate with each other within a group working towards a specific goal (Moreno, 1953) while sociodrama engages people in specific dramatic activities in order to invoke discussions, explorations and role-playing of solutions to issues and group conflicts (Kellerman, 1998). Individuals must first choose a social problem that is common to all. Group members are then cast as characters who will act out the situation. Prior to dramatization of the conflict, actors and audience members participate together in warm-up activities such as improved movements (for example move your arms like a bird, jump in a silly way) (Riley, 1990; Torrance, 1975). The actors then proceed to improvise and role-play the chosen conflict. Once this occurs, “multiple solutions may be proposed, tested, and evaluated sociodramatically. As new insights or breakthroughs occur, these too can be practiced and evaluated” (Torrance, 1975, p.185). Rich and Cargile (2004) explain that social drama occurs in the classroom when “the relative tranquility of norm governed social interaction is upset and attempts are subsequently made to establish new, or reestablish old modes of behavior” (p.352). Participants are empowered through the collective exploration and potential solutions to the concerns that are explored by the group. Sociodrama has been used successfully in such areas as health care, business, therapy and education (Creekmore & Madan, 1981; Goble, 1990; Kellerman, 1998; Rosenthal & Tetel-Hanks, 1981; Riley, 1990).

Using Sociodrama With Students to Explore Real-life Situations

Sociodrama encourages participants to develop self-confidence and self-expression through risk-taking and exploration in activities that explore real life personal

feelings and situations. For example, Rosenthal and Tetel-Hanks (1981) describe how students might explore the social issue of bullying through sociodrama:

The impact of [bullying] can be explored using the imaginary setting of a school lunchroom or the school bus. This will be helpful for the children in the group who exhibit aggressive behavior as well as those who may be the victims of bullying (p.16).

In this example, students might choose to examine the issue of bullying as a group. Roles of the bully, the bullied victim, and bystanders would be assigned to students. After preparation for the drama activities through warm-ups, students would then improvise a bullying scenario. Students in the audience who are observing this action brainstorm alternative endings or solutions for the bullying problem. These solutions would then be dramatized and discussed by the group.

Although bullying may be a frightening topic for some students, by exploring it in a safe space and through the sociodramatic process, students can express their concerns and find alternative solutions. The next time they are confronted in a bullying situation they are familiar with the situation and can respond with the tools they have gathered from their experiences within the sociodrama. A student who is a bully in school may realize through the sociodrama experience that his or her actions are cruel to others. The exploration of bullying in a safe space will empower students who may be bullied in real life, and aid them in developing a more positive self-concept and self-esteem. A bully may realize that his or her actions are hurtful, and resolve to become more caring and compassionate towards others (Rosenthal & Tetel-Hanks, 1981).

Every person involved in a sociodramatic activity is important to its success. This is because the concern explored through the actual sociodrama process is one that is important to everyone. Each person has a voice when deciding what to explore through sociodrama. Even though certain people are cast to dramatize the problem, these actors *as well as* the audience members (people not acting) are responsible for participating in the warm-up activities and suggesting alternative endings to the social issues being explored. In Boal's (1985) Theatre of the Oppressed, a specialized form of social drama, the audience members are renamed *spectators* because their roles in the drama are considered just as important as the actors on stage.

Sociodrama has been used extensively as a tool for exploration, therapy and socialization in diverse and sensitive areas. These areas include the elderly in nursing homes (Trzinski & Higgins, 2001), juvenile delinquents (Sime & Lee, 1998), wartime counselors (Stein, Ingersoll, & Treadwell, 1995), and adolescent sex offenders (Lambie, Robson, & Simmonds, 1997). Sociodrama has also been used in education to examine such issues as problem solving, behaviour intervention and therapy, diversity, and communication skills (Creekmore & Madan, 1981; Grieco & Chambliss, 2001; Landy & Borisoff, 1987; Rosenthal & Tetel-Hanks, 1981; Riley, 1990). Unlike other types of classroom drama activities, sociodrama encourages students to use their "creative abilities and challenges the teacher to seize the 'teachable moment'" while providing students with the opportunity to "tackle the kinds of real-life problems" (Riley, 1990, p.30) they encounter every day. According to Rosenthal and Tetel-Hanks (1981) students "...develop the ability to approach a problem constructively, [ask] themselves questions about it and [view] the situation from different perspectives before they take action"

(p.16). Sociodrama is a successful agent of change in the classroom because it encourages students to explore these personal and social concerns while allowing participants the opportunity to express themselves in a safe and supportive environment (Warren, 1993).

Sociodramatic play in kindergarten has been defined as “play that involves voluntary social role-taking with others” (Levy, Wolfgang, & Koorland, 1992, p.246). When exploring sociodramatic play in the drama center with children ages four through six, it was found that student involvement in sociodramatic play for nine days, twenty-five to thirty minutes each day, led to increased language performance. Student conversations in role during the sociodramatic play “served as a supportive scaffold” (p.258) providing a safe environment for students to experiment and adapt complex language functions. Levy, Wolfgang and Koorland emphasize the importance of sociodramatic play activities in kindergarten environments for providing student opportunities for interaction and role-playing.

Kemple (1996) describes multiple emotional benefits for children participating in regular sociodramatic play including peer cooperation, greater empathy, reduced aggression and better perspective-taking abilities. However student involvement in unrestricted sociodramatic play is often limited or lost in the current age of standardized testing and rigid curriculum. Kemple states that the many benefits of student involvement in sociodramatic play justify its inclusion as an integral part of the kindergarten classroom.

Zachariah and Moreno (2006) present a case study in which grade four students engaged in forty-minute sociodrama workshops in an effort to reduce conflict and teach

students to be more compassionate to each other in the classroom. By engaging students in warm-ups, sociodramas, and student reflection, it was observed that at the conclusion of the sociodramatic work, students appeared to be more cognizant of the exclusionary actions taking place in the classroom. After the sociodramas students appeared to be making more of an effort to include more of their peers in play activities and engaging in more positive conversations with each other. This resulted in both students and their parents requesting that sociodramas be included in future classroom experiences.

Theatre of the Oppressed

Theatre of the Oppressed is a form of interactive, participatory theatre designed by Augusto Boal in the 1950's (Boal, 1985, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006). It encompasses three kinds of activities including the collection of participant information, theatre games, and structured exercises (Paterson & Weinberg, 1996). Many of Boal's activities focus on bringing the audience into the action of the occurring drama instead of allowing them to be passive onlookers. Engaged participants rehearse strategies for personal and social change through theatrical exploration (Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994). Theatre of the Oppressed also focuses on the use of theatre and theatre activities to promote self-discovery, self-limitation, and personal attitudes.

Aesthetics of the Oppressed

From its first conception the Theatre of the Oppressed method of sociodrama has evolved into many different forms including the Rainbow of Desire (Boal, 1995) which uses physical imagery and improvisation to make visible the various emotions people experience, as well as Legislative Theatre (Boal, 1998) which uses the dynamics of theatre to explore what kinds of legislation need to be enacted to address community

problems. Boal's most recent theatrical evolution is *Aesthetics of the Oppressed* (Boal, 2006) which seeks to develop in its participants the ability to perceive their surroundings through all the arts including "the word" using writing activities, "the sound" using instruments and musical sounds, and "the image" including paintings, sculptures and photography (p.4).

According to Boal (2006):

The *Aesthetics of the Oppressed* is based on the scientific fact that in any individual when the neurons of sensory perception – the cells of the nervous system – are activated, these neurons do not get filled up, like the bytes in a computer, storing aesthetic information. They neither empty nor fill – knowledge does not take up space, as common sense tells us! In contrast to solitary bytes, when stimulated, neurons form circuits which become ever more capable of receiving and transmitting more and more simultaneous messages – sensory or motor, abstract or emotional – enriching their functionality and activating neighbouring neurons so that they too go into action, creating ever greater networks of linked circuits which make us remember other circuits, establishing relations between circuits which maintain some semblance or affinity between themselves, which enables us to create, invent, imagine. (p.21)

This description of how the brain manages new information and merges it with preexisting ideology through sociodrama has great implications for those who engage in theatre of the oppressed activities. When the brain is introduced to new messages (for example words, sounds, images) relationships will be formed with the old messages and the interaction of new and old will influence each other. "The primary sounds will

influence the reception of new sounds; the primary images, new images; the old words will be confronted with new words; old concepts with new concepts; primary values with new values (Boal, 2006, p.22). Interaction with old and new words, sounds, and images by participants of the Theatre of the Oppressed activities may lead to a change in how the brain responds to stimuli, resulting in a change in thought and action.

Empowering Students Through the Use of Theatre of the Oppressed Activities

According to Linds (1998), Theatre of the Oppressed practices can be adapted for use in educational programs to prevent racism in schools by students as well as teachers. In these programs, facilitators used power plays to allow people who do not know each other to eventually create short plays about whatever concerned them as a collective group. Participants explored how power and powerlessness can be expressed through the body and emotions. Participants used non-verbal exercises to build an understanding of complex themes that are used to create a play to be performed for their peers. This performance aided the group in suggesting and enacting alternative ways of dealing with situations presented in the power plays.

The theories of Boal have been used as a way to discover teachers' further potential for use of theatre in their classrooms. Kaye and Ragusa (1998) describe a study that examined the multicultural reality of today's schools and evaluated student teachers' use of Boal's sociodramatic theories. This qualitative study involved reflective journals, classroom discussions, observations, and a series of classroom activities which helped student teachers develop critical thinking strategies for the use of Boal's Theatre in their classrooms. Students used weekly reflective journals and in each entry wrote about different perspectives concerning a question, situation, or case study introduced by the

instructor. After the first two weeks of school, exercises from Theatre of the Oppressed were used at the beginning of each class. Small group analyses of responses to these exercises then followed. Scenes were performed again, incorporating the suggestions on how to reformat them. Enactments were based on current educational issues. A constructivist classroom was created where participants were able to try out solutions to real-life problems and to discuss the transformation process for change. The activities allowed student teachers the opportunity to view their own choice of role in the classroom and school. According to Kaye and Ragusa, Boal's drama allows the student teachers a safe space to think about what made their school a positive place for both students and teachers.

Johnson (2001) states that theatre of the oppressed can be used in primary and secondary schools to raise levels of consciousness and empower people to challenge victimization. Two female actors piloted a workshop with girls from a year 10 class in a mixed comprehensive school. A scene was created based on the experience of one of the girls being bullied in the lunchroom by a fellow male classmate. Through discussion during and after the scene, the girls became conscious of the occasions they allowed themselves to be bribed and flattered by male classmates to survive in their classroom. The experience and discussion through drama revealed the issue of sexual harassment. Many girls shared their personal experiences. The forum theatre scene about sexual harassment allowed the girls to act together, empowering them. A number of decisions were made including raising the issue of sexual harassment at the next school council meeting, making an appointment with the head teacher to discuss the harassment incidents, and the agreement to keep records of any further experiences. Two months

after the forum theatre workshop, a new school rule regarding the intolerance of sexual harassment involving students was mandated.

In a study by O'Toole & Burton (2002), the issue of sibling confrontations was explored by a group of year nine and twelve students through a modified theatre of the oppressed experience. The class was invited to intervene and make suggestions regarding how the confrontation in the scene could be avoided or mediated. The students were permitted to attempt trial mediation and possible solutions, which were tested in the action of the situation and also examined by the audience of peers. In this situation, the grade twelve students created the conflict and invited the grade nine students to provide solutions. A grade nine member provided a solution that seemed so effective that the class spontaneously and enthusiastically applauded. By using Theatre of the Oppressed techniques in the classroom, students were able to effectively explore and suggest resolutions for issues of conflict in their lives.

Empathy and Care in Education: Nature or Nurture?

Caring and altruistic characteristics and behaviours in human beings can be explained as neurological (also known as *nature*) responses and environmental (also known as *nurture*) responses (Eisler & Levine, 2002). The human body contains a system of neurotransmitters and peptide hormones that utilize the peptide oxytocin. Oxytocin “affects regulation and mediation of social bonding” (p.11). According to Eisler and Levine (2002) dopamine, oxytocin, the orbital and medial prefrontal cortex, and the subcortical affect the regulation system which “[mediates] cultural expression, or suppression, of our caring capacities” (p.11) resulting in a person expressing caring or uncaring behaviours towards others. This suggests that human physiology may be partly

responsible for how caring or uncaring a human being naturally is and is reminiscent of Boal's Aesthetics of the Oppressed (2006) approach to theatre.

Neurological systems including the brains cortexes and producers of dopamine and oxytocin are genetically determined, however, early societal interactions with others may also "enhance or suppress these genetic tendencies" (Eisler & Levine, 2002, p.18). Early experiences with other human beings help provide the structure or "framework" (Eisler & Levine, 2002, p.18) for human brains. For example a child may grow up to be caring or uncaring towards others as a result of the early interactions and experiences he or she has had with other human beings. A child who experiences caring and nonviolent interactions with others may also grow and develop to be caring and nonviolent, while a child who engages in uncaring and violent interactions may develop these characteristics him or herself later on in life. Eisler and Levine suggest that repeated patterns of caring or uncaring interactions and experiences stimulate a young child's brain, possibly creating "lasting synaptic effects" (p.19) that may result in caring or uncaring tendencies later on in life. It is for this reason that opportunities for personal and communal exploration of issues of social important should exist in kindergarten.

Eisler and Levine (2002) contend that a young child's brain is very impressionable and that the human characteristic of caring "is related to neural circuits and biochemicals that are either activated or not activated by experience" (p.25) early in life. Social interactions, especially in early childhood and elementary education, might help promote caring or uncaring behaviours in humans (Aronson, 2004; Zimbardo, 2004). Humans naturally desire caring, peaceful, and freeing relationships with others (Eisler & Levine, 2002). As a result of co written influences (*nurture*) affecting human physiology

(*nature*) this desire for engaging in altruistic relationships might be achieved by “building social structures and systems of belief that support rather than inhibit the human capacity for caring” (Eisler & Levine, 2002). This suggests that elementary students should be exposed to and engaged in frequent activities that model and promote caring and empathetic relationships among others.

The acquisition and development of caring and empathetic behaviours in human beings may be influenced by both biology and culture (Levine, 2002). According to Levine many things including social contexts can mediate gene expression, which is biologically determined. In particular the brains of young children are more easily shaped and reshaped as a result of the experiences they have. As a result children might be encouraged to become more caring and empathetic individuals if they are engaged in repeated activities and experiences that promote this behaviour.

Promoting Caring and Empathetic Relationships in the Classroom

When discussing how teachers might define and promote caring relationships in the classroom, Blizek (1999) encourages educators to remember that personal attitudes and motives are important considerations when examining caring relationships between people. When engaging in a caring act towards another it “is not just what people do...that matters, but how they do it, or with what attitude they do what they do” (Blizek, 1999, p.96). If a person engages in a perceived caring act for some personal benefit, the act is not a caring one towards the other person but rather one of personal motivation and empowerment for the person expressing the act. Blizek encourages educators to “properly understand our underlying motivation” (p.108) for engaging in caring acts because the “opportunity for self-deception to affect our decisions and behaviour is considerable. And

if we do not properly understand our underlying motivation, we are more likely to treat others unfairly or without care” (p.108). It is for this reason that students who are engaged in situations, which promote caring and empathetic behaviours in the classroom, should be aware of and understand their motivations for such behaviours. Drama may be a tool that educators can use in the classroom to help students explore caring relationships and situations in a safe and supportive environment.

Blum (1999) describes caring classroom communities as having certain characteristics including the tendency to “provide a sense of belonging and security, comfort and familiarity, to their members” (p.137). Members should feel connected and safe relating to other members of their community. Community members should also have “loyalty and solidarity” (Blum, 1999, p.138) for each other ensuring that members support one another in the event of an outside threat or obstacle towards another member. Members in caring communities also have “mutual care and an intensified sense of individual responsibility...for each other’s welfare” (Blum, 1999, p.139). This suggests that members truly care about how other members feel. Members take pleasure in other member’s pleasure and unhappiness in another’s sadness.

According to Noddings (1999) the true purpose of an ideal system of education should be preparation of students to engage fully in all aspects of a real life, not entry to the workforce and economic prosperity. “Ideally, it is preparation for caring – for family life, child-raising, neighborliness, aesthetic appreciation, moral sensitivity, environmental wisdom, religious or spiritual intelligence, and a host of other aspects of a full life.”

(p.14)

In discussing the role of educators, Noddings (1996) suggests that one of the most important things students learn from their teachers is “how to interact with people and other living things” (p.163). Therefore, teaching and encouraging students to participate in caring relationships in the classroom becomes a critical component of educational programming. Noddings (1984) suggests that moral education that encourages an ethics of caring in the classroom has the four components of modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. Teachers model how to care for one another by creating and engaging in caring relationships with students. In these caring relationships, both teachers and students engage in open ended genuine dialogue that “neither party knows at the outset what the outcome or decision [of the dialogue] will be” (Noddings, 1984, p.163). This form of communication promotes empathy, caring and understanding among people, as it is always a search for “something undetermined at the beginning” (Noddings, 1984, p.163) and does not seek to impose power or negative feelings on either participant. By engaging students in caring relationships and communication educators are providing opportunities for student to practice engaging in this type of relationships with others. Noddings (1984) suggests that perhaps this practice will transform the school, and then eventually the society students inhabit. Lastly, Noddings (1984) emphasizes the importance of educators confirming the caring and empathetic relationships they are witness to in schools. “When we confirm someone, we spot a better self and encourage its development” (Noddings, 1984, p.164). Continuity and consistency of student confirmation is essential for the promotion of caring and empathetic relationships in the classroom. Noddings (1996) observes:

As we look at education through the lens of caring, we see that more attention

has to be given to human relationships – to continuity of place, people, and purpose. It should be understood by teachers, parents, and students that the purpose of schooling is to produce competent, caring, loving, and lovable people. Of course, we will attend to academic and intellectual matters but the purpose even of these is to contribute to the complete growth of every child.

(p.170)

Avgitidou (2001) defines empathy in young children as a pro-social behaviour that “contributes to acts such as attempting to comfort and help and the ability to take turns and cooperate through sharing (p.146). Avgitidou states that children are able to actively construct social understandings and relationships through their involvement in daily routines. In Avgitidou’s observations of a kindergarten classroom, it was observed that through experiencing shared beliefs, values and understandings children are able to practice and maintain peer relationships.

According to Meier (1996) kindergarten is the ideal grade for student to explore issues of empathy within the school setting. Kindergarten students “taste, touch, drop, and bang every object they can get their hands on-including people” (p.271) in an effort to explore and understand their surroundings. Because kindergarteners imagine being many “others” (p.272) it seems logical that informed empathy might be developed in students through this unrestricted play. As Meier suggests “stepping into the shoes of others [through dramatic play allows children to experience] the ideas, feelings, pains, and mindsets of others, even when doing so creates some discomfort” (p.272) and might provide opportunities for students to practice engaging in empathetic relationships and experiences with others.

Although some kindergarten children might have difficulty “decenter[ing] and empathiz[ing] with another’s feelings” repeated experiences in the classroom will help to “accumulate some background experience” from which to draw (Aina, 1998). At the conclusion of a four-lesson unit, Aina found that even when kindergarteners were unable to connect the concept of empathy to real-life examples, they were able to provide examples from the ones explored collectively during the circle time lesson. This implies that even when students were not yet able to clearly verbalize their ideas and experiences regarding empathy, many were still able to discuss empathetic interactions explored in whole group situations. Sociodrama may be an ideal tool to use with students in order to help them identify with people other than themselves as it utilizes the role-playing of individual and social concerns.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

“From within the openings that are created by arts research, people – just ordinary people, you and me, researchers as participants as audiences – can implement new visions of dignity, care, democracy, and other postcolonial ways of being in the world.” (Finley, 2005, p.689)

In the tradition of a/r/tography (Cole, Neilsen, Knowles, & Luciani, 2003; Eisner, 1998; Felshin, 1995; Finley, 2005; Piirto, 2002) this study encouraged researcher, teacher and student participation “in arts making as a means of effecting social change” in order to promote individual voices and to “encourage audiences to define themselves not as passive spectators but rather as active participants in the artworks” (Finley, 2005, p.684). Through the use of sociodrama, students were encouraged to create and reflect as a classroom community so that they could experience multiple perspectives and perhaps “see themselves, and art, as if for the first time” (Pinar, 2004, p.23). A/r/tography is described as the “coming together of art and graphy, or image and word” (Springgay, Irwin, & Wilson Kind, 2005, p.900). The visual and oral images of dramatic moments from the workshops coupled with a reflexive journal, interviews, personal correspondence and a written recording of the dramatic moments provided a layered representation of the students’, teacher’s, and researcher’s experiences throughout the sociodrama. These experiences, as observed throughout the twelve workshops, have been represented in the form of narrative. This qualitative research was designed to explore whether sociodrama might be implemented into a Senior Kindergarten classroom and what the effects of the sociodrama workshops were including an examination of any themes or issues that arose from the drama. As the non-participant observer, I documented through various texts the facets of dramatic art that students choose to create within sociodramatic activities at the kindergarten level. As the expert artist I planned the

workshops in collaboration with Mrs. Brown (pseudonyms have been used in this study), an experienced early childhood educator. Prior to the workshops I trained and prepared Mrs. Brown to lead the students through the dramatic activities in the tradition of sociodrama. As each workshop unfolded I observed and documented the students' individual and collective responses to the art form using field notes, reflexive journals, oral statements from students, interviews and personal correspondence with Mrs. Brown. Student experiences, as I observed and interpreted them, were represented using first and third person narrative in an effort to artistically represent the lived moments from the workshops, and the students' evolving artistic abilities within the theatrical work.

This a/r/tographic study was bound in place and time (Berg, 2001), as I conducted the research at one particular school (as volunteered by the classroom teacher) for the month of April 2007. I spent twelve days exploring the use of sociodrama in a/r/tographic tradition as artist, researcher, and teacher, while using multiple sources of information to provide a detailed, in-depth picture of the students' aesthetic actions, interactions, and responses within and to the workshops. As an artist who was training the teacher, I needed to consider how students would respond to and interact within the sociodramatic activities. Traditionally sociodrama has certain procedures and roles and I wanted to ensure that the dramatic activities Mrs. Brown was leading were as pure in form to sociodrama as possible. As well, due to the young age of the students and the nature of their educational environment, in role as researcher and teacher I needed to consider how the sociodrama activities needed to be modified for implementation in the classroom. I also needed to consider the dramatic abilities of the students and whether they would be able to participate fully in the drama. Lastly as the a/r/tographer, I wanted to ensure that I

was able to observe every dramatic moment in its purest form so that I could record, reflect upon, and accurately represent the experiences students were having in the workshops.

Site and Research Participants

Students and their teacher from one Senior Kindergarten classroom from a large, urban public board of education in Southern Ontario participated in this study. I purposely invited Mrs. Brown to participate because I felt she was “thoughtful, informative, articulate, and experienced” (Gay & Airasian, 2003, p.116) in a kindergarten classroom and willing to participate in every aspect of the study in addition to her job as a kindergarten teacher. I invited Mrs. Brown through an informal request by email. I met her through professional development opportunities offered by our common board of education. Mrs. Brown was the junior kindergarten teacher in her school in the previous year, resulting in this being the second year she was working with the students involved in this study. Classroom rules, routines and expectations were consistent with last year’s, resulting in students who were very close with and aware of Mrs. Brown and her expectations. In the initial interview, Mrs. Brown provided a brief synopsis of her professional background including that she was a trained early childhood educator and elementary teacher, this was her fourth consecutive year as a kindergarten teacher in this particular school, she identified herself as an advocate for Early Years education, and she was active in the professional organization the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Mrs. Brown:

- ❖ responded to interview questions (see Appendix A) prior to the sociodrama workshops being implemented in her Senior Kindergarten classroom and at the conclusion of the twelve sociodrama workshops (see Appendix F)
- ❖ communicated with me via email, telephone, and personal conversations prior to, throughout, and following the implementation of the sociodrama workshops
- ❖ helped me to plan the outlines of the twelve workshops
- ❖ implemented the twelve sociodrama workshops in place of regular programming in her classroom for a duration of 40 minutes each (Zachariah & Moreno, 2006)
- ❖ led the twelve sociodramatic workshops with students on a daily basis with my support and training
- ❖ in a journal she recorded and reflected upon any emerging understandings, issues, and themes that she noticed as the leader of the sociodramatic workshops

Senior Kindergarten Students

Eleven students (six males and five females) from one Senior Kindergarten classroom from a large, urban public board of education in Southern Ontario participated in this study. This class only had eleven students in it, resulting in the entire class participating in the sociodrama workshops and the study. Students appeared to be from varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds (for example India, Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria, Somalia, China, and Canada) and middle to high socioeconomic status, with all but one

student speaking the English language fluently. These students were selected purposively to participate as a result of Mrs. Brown volunteering to participate in this study. These students were between five and six years of age. This was the second year that these students had been working with Mrs. Brown, with the exception of one student, Ian, who had moved into the area within this past school year.

The Senior Kindergarten Students:

- ❖ participated in the twelve sociodrama workshops
- ❖ reflected upon any emerging understandings, issues, themes or acts of empathy and care as a result of their involvement in the sociodrama workshops in an oral reflection discussion at the conclusion of each workshop

In role as A/r/tographer I:

- ❖ developed the framework of the twelve workshops, alongside Mrs. Brown, prior to their implementation in the Senior Kindergarten classroom (for example selected the sociodramatic warm-ups, selected the literature in consultation with the teacher)
- ❖ trained and worked alongside Mrs. Brown to help implement the twelve sociodrama workshop by providing her with written plans for each of the twelve workshops after they were developed, communicating with her through email, telephone conversations, and personal meetings as needed, and meeting with her one hour prior to each sociodrama workshop in order to prepare for the workshop
- ❖ acted in role as “non-participant observer” (Woods, 1986, p.36) while observing the twelve sociodrama workshops led by the classroom teacher

- ❖ recorded detailed observations in the form of field notes throughout each of the twelve sociodrama workshops
- ❖ recorded and reflected upon any emerging understandings, issues, themes or acts of empathy and care that arose in personal communications (email, telephone, personal communication) with Mrs. Brown
- ❖ qualitatively coded, analyzed and interpreted the data
- ❖ recorded observations and reflections in a reflexive journal
- ❖ ensured confidentiality of teacher and student participants through the use of assigned pseudonyms rather than names for identification purposes
- ❖ layered and represented the sociodramatic moments and written observations and findings of this research a/r/tographically (Springgay, Irwin, Wilson Kind, 2005)

Procedures

My Doctoral Committee, the Research Ethics Board at the University of Windsor, and the Research Review Committee at the local school board (see Appendix B) granted approval and permission for this study. Mrs. Brown and I held an initial interview prior to the sociodrama workshops being implemented in the Senior Kindergarten classroom. The purpose of this interview was for me to gather a narrative description from Mrs. Brown regarding her students, classroom, and beliefs regarding the use and value of dramatic activities in education prior to the commencement of the workshops and reflective journaling. This was important because it provided me the opportunity to observe any positive or negative biases that Mrs. Brown may have had regarding the use of dramatic activities in her classroom prior to the collection of data. Mrs. Brown and I also had a

second interview at the conclusion of the twelve sociodrama workshops. We spoke to each other informally and on a daily basis throughout the duration of the study.

The Sociodramatic Workshops – Creating an Aesthetics of Kinder/Caring

Paterson and Weinberg (1996) describe three kinds of activities that comprise sociodrama workshops. The first is the gathering of background information through discussing and performing basic theatre exercises and activities. The second is playing of theatre games that promote the active engagement and development of trust and relationship between participants. The third involves structured dramatic exercises that involve group problem solving, physical involvement, and interactive imagining. The twelve sociodrama workshops are based on the dramatic philosophies and activities outlined by Boal (1985, 1992) (see Appendix G for the complete workshop outlines).

Through their involvement in the sociodramatic activities, students were challenged to creatively engage with their selves and others as they explored and experimented with issues of shared importance through workshops derived from Boal's (1985, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006) *Theatre of the Oppressed and Aesthetics of the Oppressed* forms of sociodrama. Their artistic abilities, interactions, and confidence within the sociodramatic activities appeared to evolve as observed with each successive workshop.

Warm-up

Each workshop began with a warm-up so that students had the opportunity to feel comfortable in the environment and working with each other (Eckloff, 2006). For the purposes of this study, warm-ups were derived from Boal's (2002) *Games for Actors and Non-actors (2nd Ed.)*. Activities from this book are intended to help prepare students to

engage in sociodramatic activities including Theatre of the Oppressed and Aesthetics of the Oppressed (Boal, 1985, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006) by encouraging them to experiment with physical movements and relations between people and objects. Games are of particular importance, as they become “metaphors for social life” (Boal, 2006, p.37). Warm-ups in the twelve workshops included muscular, sensory, memory, imagination and emotion exercises in an effort improve awareness and development of each area in preparation for sociodramatic action. For example, the space series colour warm-up in workshop one required students to walk around the room randomly. When Mrs. Brown called out a colour (for example red) students who were wearing that colour were to meet together in the middle of the walking area and freeze in a position. All others who were not wearing that colour were to continue walking around the room until Mrs. Brown called another colour.

According to Boal (2002) warm-ups also serve the important function of acting as a “communion” which helps gel the group into a “real group, rather than a mere juxtaposition of individuals” (p.264) perhaps resulting in a safe and trusting space that promotes the sharing of ideas and the taking of risks. Boal (2002) also emphasizes the importance of warm-ups prior to sociodramatic work as they serve the function of encouraging people to participate in the activities. This was especially important for students as they were beginning artists, with little dramatic arts experience, at the commencement of this study.

Sociodramatic Activity

Before sociodramatic action begins, first students determine collectively the theme or concern they wish to explore in the drama. Typically, this is done via group

discussion; however, this may be a difficult concept and task for Senior Kindergarten students, especially those with limited drama experience. According to Eckloff (2006) students engaging in a sociodrama may arrive at its concern or theme by exploring a number of pictures depicting varied situations displayed to them by the person leading the sociodrama, or by exploring a collection of stories. In each circumstance, students choose which picture or story with which the majority of the group strongly identifies and this becomes the theme or issue explore in the sociodramatic work. In this study four commonly used picture books in kindergarten classrooms including *We Share Everything* (Munsch, 1999), *I Was So Mad* (Mayer, 1983), *Corduroy* (Freeman, 1968), and *Bunny Cakes* (Wells, 1997) were used as beginning artistic prompts with students. These books were chosen in consultation with Mrs. Brown due to the social issues explored in each that are relevant for use in the Senior Kindergarten classroom including sharing with others, turn-taking, feeling anger and disappointment, loneliness, losing something of importance, having difficulty communicating with others and being understood, and sibling issues.

There were three workshops designed to accompany each book as follows:

- ❖ The first workshop, led by Mrs. Brown, introduced students to the book including an in depth analysis of the characters, setting and plot in the story. Involved discussions about characters and the conflicts in the book took place between Mrs. Brown and her students. Appropriate warm-ups from Boal (2002) helped ready students to explore the themes and issues in the book.

- ❖ The second workshop allowed all students to explore the book in detail, retelling different situations and conflicts in the story and in the fashion of forum theatre, inviting students to suggest and role-play alternative responses.
- ❖ The third workshop encouraged students to contribute suggestions for issues of importance or concern in their immediate lives or classroom environment (for example problems sharing with peers, disagreements with family members). Using the structure in forum theatre activities, students role-played these collective issues of importance and explored alternative solutions or responses. Boal reminds us that, “the seed of forum was to not give solutions, to not incite people. Let them express their own solutions” (Taussig & Schechner, 1994, p. 23).

Due to the young age of the participants and their limited exposure to sociodramatic exercises and activities, the workshops were designed in sets of three so that students could become familiar with and comfortable working in the dramatic art form. Prior artistic experiences and knowledge of the students was considered in the planning stage. Picture books were used as a reference point for students to begin to explore some social issues or concerns that might be appropriate for their age and group (in consultation with Mrs. Brown). The third workshop in each set was designed so that students might begin to collectively discuss, explore and respond to their own social issues and concerns. In addition, multiple activities from Boal’s *Aesthetics of the Oppressed* (2006) were included in the twelve workshops. These activities compliment the sociodrama activities outlined in *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Boal, 1985) and are

similar in nature to the learning based-play and art activities (for example drawing, play dough sculpture, music) that are everyday components of a kindergarten classroom in Ontario (Ministry of Education, 2006).

Concluding Discussion and Reflection

At the conclusion of the workshop, all participants engaged in an oral, whole group discussion about the sociodrama. This discussion and reflection helped participants share their experiences about participating in the sociodrama and aided them in realizing moments of motivation, purpose, behaviour, possibilities and/or preventions for the events explored in the dramatic action (Eckloff, 2006). It also helped to clarify and enrich some of my observations regarding students' experiences within the workshops.

According to Boal (2002) sociodrama activities never *really end* as the thoughts and actions explored in them continue to permeate participants' conscious and unconscious thinking and actions. Sociodrama activities "encourage autonomous activity, to set a process in motion, to stimulate transformative creativity, to change spectators into protagonists" (Boal, 2002, p.275). By concluding each workshop with an oral discussion and reflection participants were provided the opportunity to think back upon their involvement in the workshop and perhaps imagine how their explorations might extend into their lives from that moment onward.

Figure 1: Sociodrama Curriculum Connections (Ministry of Education, 2006)
(as requested by the participating School Board)

LANGUAGE ARTS

- ❖ exchange ideas, comments or questions
- ❖ use language to connect new experiences with what they already know
- ❖ describe personal experiences using appropriate vocabulary
- ❖ use language to talk about their thinking, reflect, and problem-solve
- ❖ use and interpret gesture and tone of voice to communicate and respond
- ❖ role play reading using picture support
- ❖ participate in oral discussions after read-alouds; ask questions; dramatize familiar stories
- ❖ retell stories using pictures and/or props to show understanding

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- ❖ express their own thoughts and share experiences
- ❖ demonstrate a willingness to attempt new activities
- ❖ adapt to new situations
- ❖ demonstrate an ability to take turns in activities and discussions
- ❖ use a variety or simple strategies to solve social problems
- ❖ identify personal feelings and emotions and develop an awareness of empathy for others

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITY

- ❖ participate actively in creative movement and other daily physical activities

THE ARTS

- ❖ use imagination and creativity to express drama and dance (for example role-play)
- ❖ use actions, pictures and/or words to dramatize stories
- ❖ explore a variety of tools, materials, and processes of their own choice to create visual art forms in familiar and new ways

Data Collection and Analysis

Finley (2005) holds that “imagination, community, and communal experience, as well as perceptual, emotional, and sensual awareness, all contribute to the aesthetic dimensions of arts-based research” (p.687). Qualitative data was collected from the oral, written, and visual representations and reflections of students and the teacher as found in journals, interviews, correspondence and moments I observed within the sociodrama workshops. By focusing on the “vernacular...visceral ephemeral moments in daily life” (Finley, 2005, p.687) that are also experienced through a/r/tography, people may begin to be drawn into a dialogue that “opens the possibility for critical critique of social structures” (Finley, 2005, p.687) which may promote empathy and care (Barone, 2001).

Data collection included a teacher personal reflection journal, an artist-teacher-researcher reflexive journal based on my observations of the workshops, teacher interviews (prior to and at the conclusion of the implementation of the twelve sociodrama workshops), personal correspondence between the teacher and a/r/tographer (including telephone conversations, email, and personal communications) until the end of the school year in June, and visual and oral representations by students as observed by the a/r/tographer in sociodramatic workshops.

Texts

Teacher Reflection Journal

Mrs. Brown was encouraged to record her thoughts, feelings, observations, and questions regarding the research in a personal reflection journal. She was able to record her thoughts at any time providing powerful “indications of [her] views and attitudes towards a range of subjects, and a great deal of information about [her] own background

and experiences within them” (Woods, 1986, p.98). Darell (2003) posits that journals are a powerful way for artists and educators to represent their experiences, allowing for both professional and personal elements to be interwoven while simultaneously portraying changes in beliefs, comprehension, and attitudes. Mrs. Brown was encouraged to continue recording observations, thoughts and experiences in the reflection journal after the sociodrama workshops were completed until the end of the school year in June. This provided a picture of the (inter)actions of the students and whether any themes or issues continued once the sociodrama workshops were complete.

Reflexive A/r/tographer Journal

After each workshop and whenever I felt the need to reflect or record an idea, I wrote as an observer and facilitator in a personal reflexive journal. This text provided me with an opportunity to reflexively inquire and reflect upon my observations of students in the sociodrama activities. Through the layers of writing, highlighted text, scribbles, sketching and underlines I began to see connections, think of un/familiar ideas in new ways, look between and behind what I observed to be occurring in the sociodramas workshops, and question everything.

Teacher Interviews

I interviewed Mrs. Brown prior to and at the conclusion of the twelve workshops. Interviews were semi-structured using the questioning guide found in Appendix A and Appendix F. The purpose of these interviews was to generate a narrative description of the students and classroom culture prior to, after, and beyond the sociodramatic workshops. These interviews also provided me with information regarding Mrs. Brown’s

beliefs regarding drama in education. Questions and topics of conversation evolved based on Mrs. Brown's responses and the direction of the conversation.

Personal Correspondence between the A/r/tographer and Teacher

Any communication between the Mrs. Brown and myself including phone calls, casual conversations, and emails were recorded and examined.

Art

Individual Student Aesthetics of the Oppressed Word, Image and Sound Work

Some of the sociodrama workshops involved students interacting with and responding to picture books and group discussions by creating "words" (Boal, 2006, p.44) such as group narratives or poems, "images" (Boal, 2006, p.46) such as pictures or paintings, and "sounds" (Boal, 2006, p.48) including music and rhythmic noises. Each activity that occurred as a component of the sociodrama was observed and analyzed. Boal (2006) posits that these activities allow participants the opportunity to develop their "thought, their imagination and their capacity to symbolize, to dream, and to create parables and allegories, which allow them to see, from a certain distance, the reality they want to modify" (p.40) through their participation in sociodramatic activities.

Aesthetics of the Oppressed sociodramatic activities also served as an alternative form of data representation in arts-based educational research (Stephenson, 2004). Stephenson explains that visual images explore and express ideas beyond the confines of written or spoken language. According to Diaz Soto (2005) children's drawings are a form for "visualizing voice...understanding that visual representations have functioned as a form of communication since the earliest cave drawings of ancient peoples to the present" (p.9). Swadener (2005) further explains that when children use drawing as a

form of response they use their “‘semiotic sense’ or ability to show things that they cannot always name or discuss” (p.140). The drawings included in workshops seven and ten helped me to further explore and reflect upon student experiences within the sociodramatic activities.

Visual and Oral Representations by Students in Sociodramatic Workshops

I observed each sociodramatic workshop and recorded extensive field notes in an effort to examine the interactions and responses to and within the drama by students. Permission to videotape the workshops for the sole purpose of data collection and analysis was granted by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board. Every effort was made to secure permission from the participating school board (See Appendix B), however permission to videotape students for any purpose was strictly denied (see Appendix E). The reasons for this decision that were cited included school board liability and privacy laws (P. Ricciardi, personal communication, March 30, 2007; Toronto District School Board, 2001). The school board would only grant permission for the study if Mrs. Brown led the workshops and if I recorded my observations during the workshops using only field notes.

Due to the fact that still photos or video images within this dissertation could not represent the dramatic experiences of students, the sociodramatic moments in the workshops have been represented through dramatic narratives in chapter four. The students’ sociodramatic experiences have been reflexively observed, recorded, interpreted, and layered through various texts (for example detailed field notes, reflexive journals, teacher interviews, students’ oral comments regarding the drama, etcetera). These artistic experiences have been represented in this way in an effort to make the

sociodrama that occurred accessible to the reader of this study. These narratives were my understanding of what occurred individually and collectively amongst students in the sociodramatic workshops (Chase, 2005). I have created these first person narratives in order to artistically represent the experiences of individual student artists, as observed in the twelve workshops. These narratives were followed by a third person dramatic narrative, which described the communal, artistic experience of students exploring sociodrama together as a class. The narratives were included as a way of “transforming the contents of [my] consciousness into a public form that others can understand” (Eisner, 1997, p.4). I wanted to clearly portray to the reader of this study the evolution of student artistic ability and expression, as I observed it to be occurring, in each of the twelve workshops. These narratives exist as a method for evoking a sense of place and feeling in the readers of this paper, perhaps reminiscent of similar emotions and experiences from their lives and past artistic explorations (Dunlop, 2002; Richardson, 2000; Sameshima, 2006).

In addition to best representing the increasing artistic abilities of students over the twelve workshops, I also selected narrative as the format for representing my observations in the workshops for many other reasons. According to Eisner (1997) non-replicable studies such as this dissertation can use alternative forms of data representation including narratives because these formats help the “transformation of experience from the personal to the public” (p.7). A/r/tographers are continuously exploring how to collect, present and represent educational inquiry in an effort to convey meaning and not facts about the artistic exploration which has occurred (Irwin, 2004). The first and third person narratives I have created publicly represent the individual and collective artistic

moments and experiences I personally observed, recorded and reflected upon throughout the sociodramatic activities. The fictional autobiographies in chapter four are interpretive. They are meant to “shape experience and enlarge understanding” (Eisner, 1997, p.8) for the readers of this study who were not able to personally witness the student involvement in dramatic art. Much like a playwright draws an audience into the characters’ world through setting, characterization and plot, through the third person narratives, also included in chapter four, I have attempted to provide the reader of this study with “access to [the students’] lives” and their artistically created characters and experiences in the sociodramatic workshops (Eisner, 1997, p. 8).

Limitations to the study

Participant Selection

One limitation of this research was that the results are not generalized to the general population of Senior Kindergarten students in Ontario. Participant selection in this study was not random. Due to the fact that a specific participating teacher and her students volunteered to participate in the study upon invitation, in a specific school during a specific period of time, the study is not replicable (Gay & Airasian, 2003).

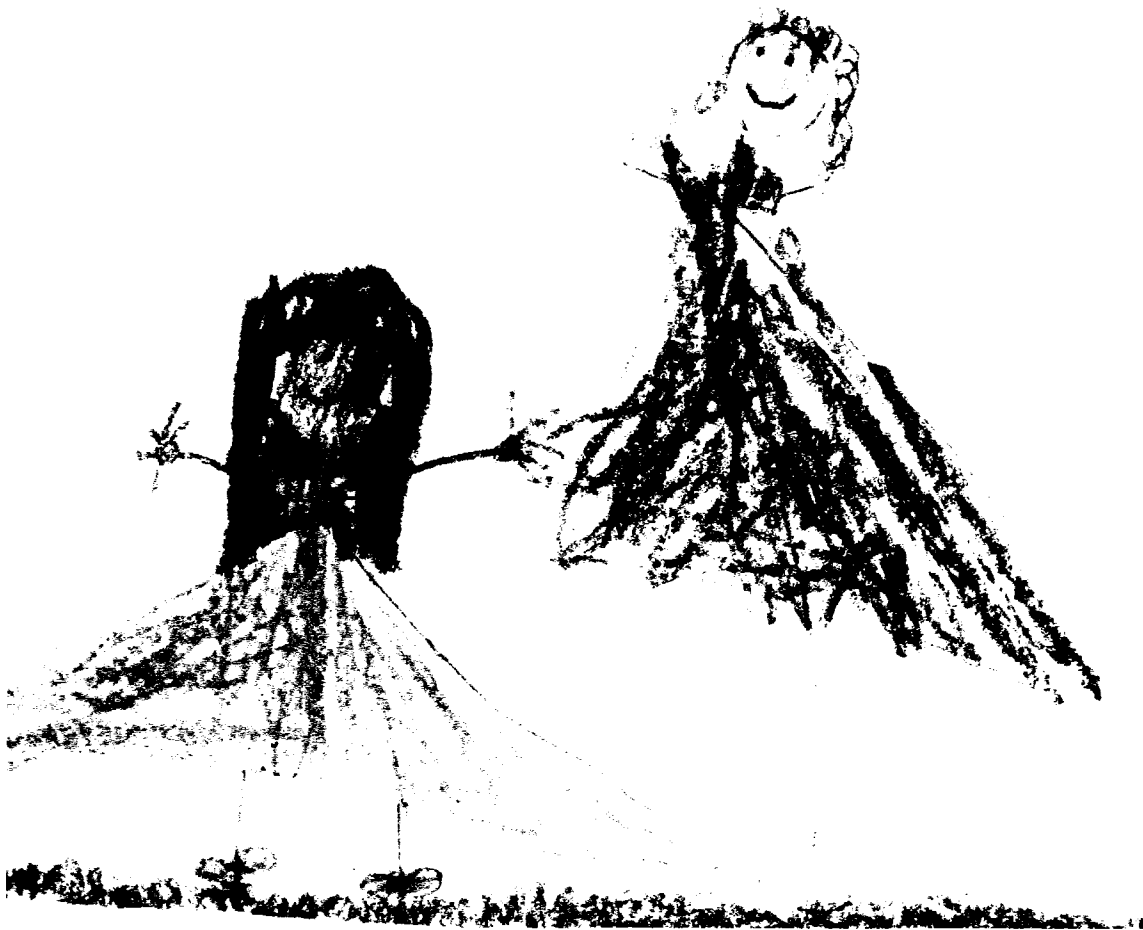
Consequence of Presence

My presence as the a/r/tographer in the classroom may have affected both the Senior Kindergarten teacher and students’ involvement and behaviour in the sociodrama workshops. It was difficult to determine if the Hawthorne effect (Roethlisberger & Dickenson, 1939), based on my presence, and the awareness that a research project was taking place, may have hindered or enhanced student and teacher participation and response to the sociodrama. Did Mrs. Brown change or elaborate her teaching style in

order to elicit student responses to workshops for the benefit of the project? Were students less willing to participate fully in the workshops due to the presence of an unfamiliar person who observed and took notes on their actions and responses? Because I was an unknown person who was observing students in a small and tightly knit classroom environment, the ability to “melt into” or “become invisible” (Berg, 2001, p.138) while collecting data in the classroom was not possible.

Mrs. Brown made many efforts to demystify my presence in the classroom to students. At the beginning of the first workshop, the recommended letter of assent (as per the University of Windsor REB request) was read to students. This letter described who I was and that a research project was taking place in the classroom. At the beginning of each subsequent workshop Mrs. Brown would welcome me to the classroom and point me out to students as I sat at a table directly next to the carpet. Most students appeared to accept and welcome my presence in the classroom. Many would walk over and say hi or show me things of importance out of their backpacks as they readied themselves for the start of the school day. Parents would address me when dropping off their children and ask casually about the research. Raja, Naresh and Inga frequently talked to me after finding their name card at sign-in time instead of reading their books on the carpet (pseudonyms have been used to protect student identity). Raja and Naresh also brought a picture book to school that they were working on at home so they could share it with me. Many students attempted to make physical contact with me in the form of waving, hugging, high-fiving, or smiling. On the last workshop day, Inga and Raja presented me with a picture they had drawn of us together.

Figure 2: Inga and Mrs. McLennan



Inga and Mrs. McLennan

Figure 3: Raja and Mrs. McLennan



“Raja and Mrs. McLennan are walking.”
We are the same height and size as opposed to Inga’s picture in which I am towering over her. We look similar and are very close in proximity.

Schram (2003) encourages qualitative researchers to “come to terms with what [s/he] can and cannot accomplish as a researcher working within boundaries of time and circumstance” (p.97) and strive to “uncover any number of possible truths and meaning manifested in the experience or words or participants” (p.97). Due to the nature of the study, data collection and analysis were ongoing, resulting in the observations of the students’ sociodramatic experiences being as reflexive as possible.

Artist-Researcher-Teacher Reflexivity

According to Edwards (2001) one of the major advantages of using qualitative research with young children is that reflexivity allows the examination of often “messy and constantly changing contexts of early childhood” (p.123). Berg (2001) reminds us that researchers need to consider “the material as raw data that may require corroboration, or verification” (p.139) through an active and ongoing construction of interpretations for the data, and the questioning for how these interpretations came to be. I attempted to be a reflexive a/r/t/ographer by continually having an “ongoing conversation” (Berg, 2001, p.139) with myself while collecting, analyzing, and interpreting my data and not reporting on findings as facts, but rather attempting to provide insights into the kindergarten world I was exploring and how these insights came to exist in the first place. Data collection involved the use of an a/r/t/ographer reflexive journal to aid with this process.

Edwards (2001) also suggests that validity in a qualitative study refers to the “extent to which it can be said that the research has captured important features of the field and has analyzed them with integrity” (p.124). In an effort to provide as sound a representation of the findings in this study as possible, data triangulation of the various data sources (for example field notes, journals, interviews, examination of the dramatic moments and Aesthetics work, a review of literature) was used. In an effort to ensure that the portrayal of the social world as it appears to the people who inhabited it (for example the kindergarten classroom, the sociodrama workshops, the students and their teacher) student discussion and reflection at the end of each sociodrama workshop was used to

help verify themes and issues that emerged in the data collection and analysis (Siraj-Blatchford & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001).

Observing the Sociodrama

Schram (2003) reminds qualitative researchers that when observing and recording observations in the form of field notes, observation should be “purposeful, circumstantial, intuitive, and empathetic” (p.98). A description of what is happening should be as accurate a representation as possible. Because the methodology used in this study is a/r/tographic in that artistic and textual data were collected by observing and analyzing moments within the sociodrama, videotaping each workshop for the purposes of data collection, analysis and eventual representation at the doctoral defense and conferences would have been ideal. However, the decision was made for the teacher to lead each of the twelve sociodrama workshops so that I could thoroughly observe and record field notes on the students’ dramatic activity.

Although many scholars recommend researchers maintain a “value neutral” (Berg, 2001, p.140) position as they examine the world around them, maintaining this “façade of neutrality” (Berg, 2001, p.141) was difficult for me considering my previous experience as a kindergarten teacher and great interest in the use of sociodrama in education for social change. Berg (2001) cites multiple researchers including Hertz, Reinharz and Ribbens and Edwards who argue against a façade of neutrality and instead encourage qualitative researchers to become involved with the research participants and reflexive about his or her observations and analyses. Woods (1986) reminds us that “however much we try to neutralize our own views, opinions, knowledge and biases and open ourselves to the understanding of others, we cannot accomplish total purification”

(p.9) in qualitative studies. Consequently, I am acknowledging my interest and previous experiences in an effort to reveal any bias in this study and have implemented triangulation in an effort to use different data sources to confirm the findings of the study (Gay & Airasian, 2003).

Leading the Sociodrama

As the a/r/tographer leading this study, I consider myself a highly qualified and competent person who is able to lead others in dramatic activities, including specialized forms such as sociodrama (Pirto, 2002). Mrs. Brown is a highly trained and experienced teacher in early years education. However, she is not a drama specialist and required training in order to be efficient at leading her students in the sociodramatic work. Mrs. Brown was provided a written, structural outline of the workshops three weeks prior to the commencement of the research (after we had collaborated together on them). This training also included extensive phone and email correspondence as well as me arriving at the participating school thirty minutes to an hour prior to each workshop to provide further training (for example provide reminders, answer questions, help prepare the workshop). Conversations and in-person training was scheduled around the time constraints of Mrs. Brown's personal and professional life. A different training schedule or location (for example more formal workshops provided by the local university) may have resulted in different results.

Time Constraints

In an effort to maximize the amount of time needed in order to have a feasible study, but not burden the teacher and students and utilize large amounts of much needed instructional time, (in consultation with the school board's RRB) the number of

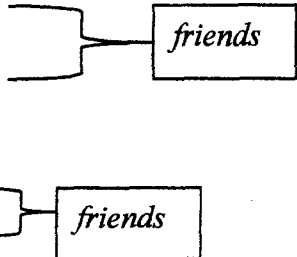
sociodrama workshops were limited to twelve, for a duration of 30 minutes each (see Appendix E). The length and frequency of entries in the reflection journals is not prescribed, therefore Mrs. Brown had the opportunity to spend as little or much time recording her thoughts as she wished. Interviews were scheduled at a time convenient to the students and teacher. Results may have been different had the length or frequency of workshops increased. In many instances the workshops exceeded the prescribed amount of time. The only occasions where Mrs. Brown ended the workshops prior to their completion were when scheduling or outside interruptions prevented the students from completing the drama.

This study involved a one-month period of time for the implementation and observation of twelve sociodramatic workshops. An extensive review of the literature in early childhood education and sociodrama did not indicate an optimum length of time for the implementation of sociodrama in the classroom, therefore, the length of the study (one month) was determined in consultation with the board of education's Research Ethics Committee. Providing these workshops at a different point in the school year (for example in June when students are very familiar and comfortable working with peers and within their classroom environment) may have provided for different findings. A different number of workshops with the students may have produced different observations.

CHAPTER IV: SENIOR KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE SOCIODRAMA WORKSHOPS

Players (names have been changed in order to protect participant identities)

AMAR, boy
 HASSAN, boy
 NARESH, boy
 DANA, girl
 FARHANI, boy
 INGA, girl
 RAJA, girl
 IAN, boy, ESL
 MADALYNN, girl
 MATTHEW, boy
 NICHOLE, girl
 MRS. BROWN, Senior Kindergarten teacher



Setting the Scene

The Senior Kindergarten classroom was a clean, bright, lively place, filled with colourful toys and learning materials. A wall full of windows allowed the outside light to filter through, illuminating the student artwork that decorated each wall. Many calendars, times and pictures were displayed on bulletin boards, reminding students of their daily schedule and what activities took place and where. Dozens of bins full of learning materials lined shelves around the room, each marked with real-life pictures of the contents, helping students to keep materials organized and in the right spot. In the center of the room was the "learning" carpet where students gathered at the beginning and ending of their school day, engaging in curriculum driven lessons or reading stories and engaging in discussion together. Dotted around the room were small tables and chairs, each set having a specific purpose for student activity time (for example language table, snack table, small toy table). A large sign hung on the classroom door welcoming visitors to the Senior Kindergarten classroom. Scattered around it were pictures of the boys and girls in action through the year: posing in front of the playground equipment, participating in special assemblies, playing in activity centers in their classroom.

Preface

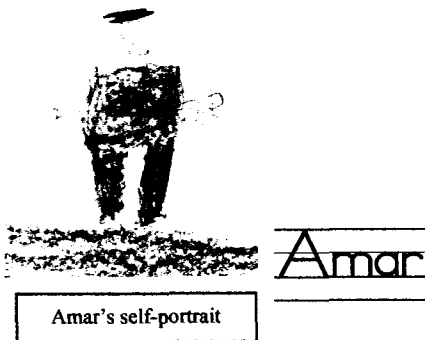
Each day students followed specific routines and procedures, beginning with their entry into the room and concluding with their dismissal from school. Mrs. Brown greeted students as they entered the classroom and proceeded immediately to their individual cubbies where they stored their personal belongings while at school. Once everything was hung in the cubby, students placed their "note totes" (individual bags that contain important letters, signed forms, and any other written communication between Mrs. Brown and parents) in a special bin. At the "sign in" table, students found their name card and then proceeded to the carpet where they individually looked at picture books

while waiting for the school announcements to begin. At the conclusion of the standing for the playing of the national anthem and listening to announcements from the office, students engaged in daily circle rituals (for example taking attendance, putting their books away, putting their name cards in a special bin, singing a daily song, counting while the attendance is taken to the office, discovering who the special student called the “star” is for the day). These activities occurred before each of the twelve sociodrama workshops.

Mrs. Brown: “My classroom is designed so that children are able to function independently with limited adult support. I have all materials at their level with digital pictures and words on each bin in our class. The children use the pictures and words to help them identify where items belong and where they can locate an item if it is needed during their day. The children use a planning board to help them decide what centers they are going to use during free choice time. This is also to help create independence and choice making. They need to decide how they are going to plan a portion of their day so that they are able to use centers in the classroom. The classroom is colourful. Learning materials are located on the walls and bulletin boards and the children each have their own spot for their art or special work to be displayed. Our classroom is a place where everyone is part of a family and it is a place where the children are safe and free to take risks while learning.” (first interview)

I have interwoven and weaved together the following (auto)biographies of students from layers of observation, art and text including visual moments within the dramas, written field notes documenting what students said and did in the workshops, reflexive journals, and verbal and written communication between Mrs. Brown and myself. I created these (auto)biographies in order to attempt to inquire into the student’s individual and collective worlds in order to create additional meanings about their involvement within the sociodrama (Springgay, Irwin, and Wilson Kind, 2005).

Even in the void of not knowing, we nonetheless come to know, how when we have no interpretation, we nonetheless construct one, gathering wisps of sight and sound that surround us into images that, through the weaving of interpretation, become real for us. (Neumann, 1997, p.96)



My name is Amar. I am a very eager student in our class. I like to answer questions and share my ideas with my teacher and classmates. When my class first began the drama workshops I was always one of the first boys to help out with playing a part in the games or drama activities. Usually I spent a lot of time concentrating on what I was doing; making faces and working alongside my friend Hassan. Hassan and I like to talk to each other a lot about what we are doing in activities in class. During the second drama workshop I was one of the first students to put my hand up to help retell the story we had read. I wanted to act as Amanda's part, but quickly changed my mind and put my hand down when my friends laughed at me.

As we had more workshops I was still one of the most involved boys in the class, always asking if I could act in the sociodrama activities. Many times I needed Mrs. Brown to help me by telling me what to say and do and by telling me I was doing a good job. Mrs. Brown helped me a lot. She helped me to talk and move like the characters. With more practice I felt more comfortable in the drama activities and I didn't need as much help. I liked sharing my ideas about what problems my class should explore in our drama work. Sometimes in the drama workshops I became upset and disappointed when the sociodrama had to end because of our class schedule.

In workshop four my friend Hassan had a lot of trouble. Hassan spent a lot of time upset and crying throughout our drama activities. I tried to help him by playing with him (for example “Look, I’m going to pretend to throw the ball, catch it.” or by repeatedly swinging my arms as though I was throwing a ball at Hassan) but he wanted nothing to do with the activity. When Hassan laid down on the carpet to cry, I gave up and finally found Mrs. Brown so she could be my partner.

Every time we had a drama class I acted more and more. I liked being part of the activities and liked to talk about what I did and thought after each activity. When I would act in the scenes, I would use lots of movement and sounds to help me (for example growling with anger, flapping my arms with excitement). I was so excited! I couldn’t hide my smiling face and eager hand raised and waving in the air. I was becoming a leader in our classroom! Sometimes I found it hard to contain my excitement and enjoyment in the activities in our class. I often giggled, looked around excitedly at my friends, whispered to my drama partners, and shared my ideas nonstop throughout the entire workshop.

By the end of the sociodrama workshops I spent a lot of my time helping Mrs. Brown explain our activities, being the first student to try new activities, sharing my ideas for how to solve problems in the drama and sharing my ideas in class discussion. I spent a lot of time smiling, laughing and sitting next to many new friends as well as Hassan. I still had a hard time understanding why the drama has to stop just because it’s time for my class to go to gym or music.



Dana's self-portrait

Dana

I was a quiet person right from the start of the drama activities. Instead of participating I chose to sit back and watch, sometimes sitting so far away from the other kids in my class that Mrs. Brown would have to ask me to move closer to everyone. When I sat far away from everyone I liked to watch other people with my eyes half-closed, so they didn't know I was looking at them. Sometimes at the beginning of the drama activities I would look over at Mrs. McLennan and shyly mouth the word "hi" to her. Sometimes if Mrs. Brown kept asking me questions I would answer her – but only when asked.

At the beginning of the drama workshops we read the book *We Share Everything* by Robert Munsch (1999). I was shy but still volunteered to act out a character in this story. During the scene I was so nervous! I had trouble moving and talking and Mrs. Brown needed to help me think of what to say and do. This was the only time at the beginning of the drama workshops that I volunteered to participate. For the rest of the first few workshops I sat away from the rest of the kids, at the back of the carpet, and did not participate in any activities or discussions.

At the beginning of workshop four I was very excited to hear that we would be acting as though we were playing ball games inside the classroom and using musical instruments. I jumped up and down and waved my arms in the air. But as soon as the activities began and Mrs. Brown asked me to move around the room with the other kids I

asked her if I could move away from the loud noises other students were making. When she said yes, I got up and left the carpet area and sat in the furthest chair possible from where everyone else was sitting. Mrs. Brown tried to talk me into playing the games but I did not want to and told her so. After a while I lost focus of what everyone else was doing and began to pick at the instrument that was sitting in my lap.

I started to feel more comfortable in the drama activities. I put my hand up a few times to have a turn with Mrs. Brown asking me to. I even acted as a boy character during one of the scenes. Sometimes when my friends would finish acting in their drama scene I would clap my hands together hard and say "good actors, good actors". The more I tried the sociodrama activities, the less help I needed from Mrs. Brown. She did not have to help me with my actions or words. I could act with other kids in the drama without any help from anyone. The more I tried acting in the drama scenes, the more I liked it. I raised my hand a lot to participate in the drama and smiled a lot at my friends when they acted in the scenes. I sat with the other kids instead of far away at the back of the carpet.

Around workshop seven I started to become confused about what I needed to say and do in the drama activities. I needed some help and support from Mrs. Brown in the activities. Sometimes I was so tired and almost fell asleep by the end of the activities. I even missed one workshop because I was sick!

When I felt better I came back to school. I wanted to help out in the activities so I put my hand up a lot so I could have a turn. This did not last long. In the last two workshops I did not participate at all in the activities. I sat at the back of the carpet again and did not talk to anyone, not even Mrs. Brown. I stared across the room quietly until the activities were done and it was time to start play time.



Farhani

Farhani's self-portrait

I was with the drama activities right from the start! I loved to share my ideas about the warm-ups and activities whenever I had the chance. Sometimes I would look over at Mrs. McLennan and raise my eyebrows and smile with excitement about what we were doing in class. Other times I would look at her when Mrs. Brown would explain an activity or if one of my friends was talking. It's like I wanted to see what Mrs. McLennan was thinking about what we were doing in my classroom.

Every time we had a drama workshop I participated more and more. I felt very comfortable acting and I needed less help and encouragement from Mrs. Brown. I could even talk and move and act like the characters in the drama scenes.

Around the middle of the drama workshops I began to lead some of my friends in the activities. Sometime I would help my drama partners when they had trouble starting their scene (for example "Okay, pretend that I have the ball and I'm going to start first. I'm going to throw it to you to hit. Good job!"). I also liked to concentrate on what I was doing during our activities. I used my whole body to help me act and made different faces to show my feelings. When I really liked an activity I would ask if the boys and girls could try it again. Often we couldn't because it was time to go to another activity like music or gym. Sometimes we did the drama again later on during playtime.

During most workshops I was the busiest boy. I was usually the first person to try something new and often showed my friends how to play the games. I was also the first

kid to suggest using a chair as a prop in the drama scene. My friends seemed to like this idea and used the same chair in every scene after mine, changing it into whatever was needed at the time (for example a dollhouse, a bed, the side of a house). I usually took the lead in whatever scene I was in, beginning the acting and helping my friends by talking to them like the characters. I would much rather act in the scenes than sit and watch what was happening in the audience.

In workshop six I decided to try something new and raised my hand to be a girl character in the drama scenes. I also liked to share my ideas for how scenes could be changed or ended. Sometimes instead of sharing my ideas with Mrs. Brown I whispered my ideas to the friends sitting around me. I laughed and smiles a lot! I always had lots of fun doing the drama. My friends and I laughed and smiled in all of our activities. We usually would continue playing the games and drama scenes later on during playtime.

By the end of the drama workshops I was still one of the most active students in our class. I liked to suggest ideas for the class to explore in the drama and sometimes suggested different endings for these ideas. In the last few scenes I was even able to use props and improvise lines that weren't part of the original story. I was being a true leader for my friends.



Hassan

Hassan's self-portrait

At the start of the drama workshops I was very quiet. Most of the time Mrs. Brown would ask me to be a part of the games and activities. I often sat by my friend

Amar and we would talk and giggle quietly with each other while everyone else was doing the drama. When I did act in the scenes Mrs. Brown would help me by telling me what to say and do. I was always relieved when the activity was finished.

I was a little more comfortable in the next few workshops. I volunteered to participate in some of the warm-up activities and watched my friends closely when they acted out the drama scenes. When I needed help I asked Mrs. Brown. I forgot what sound a wolf makes and needed help before I could act a wolf out. After the warm-up activities I did not participate much in the group talks and instead sat and listened to what other kids had to say.

Towards the middle of the drama workshops I began to volunteer to act in some of the drama scenes. I needed a lot of help from Mrs. Brown. She helped me by telling me what to do and say when I was acting. At the end of my acting scenes I did not talk about what I did and instead sat down next to Amar. I did not participate in any of the discussion.

I really liked the activities in workshop eight. I liked when we had to change something about the way we looked and another person had to guess what we had changed. I was tricky and took my sock off but kept my shoe on. Amar had such a hard time guessing what I had changed! I could not stand the excitement! I hopped from foot to foot, grinning and giggling at Amar. Some of the kids who were sitting next to us were trying to guess what I had changed, but they couldn't! When the drama workshop had to end early because it was picture day, I was so disappointed!

I was very quiet in the last few drama workshops. I really did not participate much in the activities or discussions; only the warm-ups where everyone had a turn. Sometimes

I was nervous and uncomfortable. I was quiet and had a frown on my face during some of the activities. When I watched my friends act out the scenes I would often shake my head yes in agreement with what they were doing. Sometimes I looked at Mrs. Brown to see what she thought about what was happening. Once in a while I would put my hand up quickly as if I wanted to be a part of the activities, but would quickly take it down as soon as Mrs. Brown would begin to call out names for helpers.



Inga's self-portrait

Inga

I love to share my ideas with others! I was super excited to participate in the drama workshops. I had so many turns pretending to be different characters in the dramas. My teacher did not have to help me out at all with what to say and how to act. I already knew what to do because I like to spend lots of my time at the dramatic arts center in our classroom during playtime. When I act like somebody else, I use my hands and make faces to help show who I am. At the beginning of our workshops I was especially interested in finding out who Mrs. McLennan was. I asked her lots of questions about her house and baby and said hi to her at the beginning of every drama workshop. I even drew a picture of us walking together and gave it to her. I made sure to tell Mrs. McLennan about the different activities I do in class. I love sharing my ideas with other people.

Even though I missed a few workshops because I wasn't at school, I still helped act in almost every single game during our drama time. I liked to use my whole body when I acted, moving around and making motions with my hands. I also make faces to show if I am happy or sad when I act. I'm usually the most active girl in our class. Sometimes I even help out other kids in my scene by saying things like, "Come on we can do it" or "That's right". If other kids have trouble acting I also try and give them ideas for things to say and do (for example "Good job", "Maybe you could ask your sister if he could play with the dollhouse"). When I am done acting in the drama scenes I like to talk about what happened with other people in my class. Sometimes we think about different ways the characters could act in the scene.

Even though I like working with other students, I sometimes have trouble working with certain people. In one class I had to work with Matthew and we had a lot of trouble drawing a picture together. We could not pick what to make and Mrs. Brown had to come and help us. In the end we decided to draw separate pictures. I was not happy at all that the pictures had to be drawn separate because we were supposed to work together, but Mrs. Brown told me it was okay if Matthew and I had separate pictures even though everyone else in the class was working together.

By the end of the workshops I was one of the kids who participated the most in the drama. I was so excited to participate that I often yelled out ideas to Mrs. Brown's questions before anyone else. I continued to act in almost every activity and helped my friends when they had trouble in the drama. The drama activity that I was most interested in was the last one we did. It was about something that happened that morning to me. There was a noise that was happening in the car when my dad was driving me. My

dad thought that I was making the noise and asked me to stop. I tried lots of times to tell my dad that I was not making the noise, that my chair was making the noise when the car moved. My dad did not understand what I was saying. I was so upset! At first when the class was going to act out what happened between my dad and me I wanted to act as myself. But I changed my mind and instead asked the teacher if I could watch someone else do it. When we talked about the drama after it happened I told everyone that I now knew what to do next time this happened to me!



Ian

Ian's self-portrait

I was very excited to have a new teacher and made sure that I went over to Mrs. McLennan every day that she was in our classroom and yelled "HELLO" to her. Although I don't know English well, I am usually eager to play with others in classroom activities. I use my hands to point to things so that others can understand what I am saying. Sometimes I also repeat words and sounds I hear other people say. When I first began the drama workshops I was very happy – always looking around the classroom and clapping my hands. I was very eager. Sometimes though I became distracted. Mrs. Brown would have to stop teaching and call my name lots of times!

Sometimes Mrs. Brown also helped me act in the sociodramas. She would tell me what to do. Usually though I just got in trouble. I just couldn't help myself! I was excited so I started to yell and jump around the carpet during drama time instead of working with my partner. I was too busy worrying about what other kids were doing. I spent a lot of

time walking around the room hugging and touching kids. Mrs. Brown was not happy when I left my partner to help others.

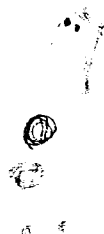
Around the middle of the workshops I stopped listening to what I was supposed to do. Instead I liked to jump and run off the carpet during the drama. I laughed and yelled at all the other kids in the class. Sometimes I even got into a fight with other students like Matthew. Most times everyone else would ignore me, but Matthew usually became very angry at me, putting his hands over his eyes and making faces in response to what I was doing. I do not get along with Matthew at all!

There was one drama scene that I was very excited to be a part of. In workshop six we talked about some problems that Amar was having with his mom not understanding him at home. At first when I said I wanted to be a part of the drama I thought I was going to act like Amar's dad. I was wrong! It was his mom that I needed to pretend to be. That was okay. I acted like Amar's mom.

After the workshop where I acted like Amar's mom I got into lots of trouble again with Mrs. Brown. Most of the time I did not understand what Mrs. Brown was asking me to do, no matter how many different ways she tried (for example verbally, with hand gestures, by modeling with other students). Mrs. Brown kept calling my name and asking me to help with the acting. I was very upset and at the end of the drama workshop I ran over to Mrs. McLennan. I hugged her and wouldn't let go! I asked her, "You come back tomorrow, okay?" She told me she would come back.

After that class I really did not participate much in the drama activities. Sometimes I would sit and watch what my friends were doing. I did not do anything unless Mrs. Brown asked me to. After a while I lost all my focus and started to bother the

other kids. I would yell in the middle of an activity or when someone else was talking. Mrs. Brown tried to get me to stop by calling my name or asking me to move to another spot on the carpet, but I did not want to do anything she asked. Instead I spent the drama time touching and playing with anything that was close to me on the carpet like things on the bookshelves, Mrs. Brown's stuff, and other kids sitting near me. When the other kids told Mrs. Brown that I was bothering them, she moved me away from the carpet and asked me to sit on a chair. After this I did not even watch my friends act. I sat and stared into space.



Madalynn

Madalynn's self-portrait

I was so shy when we first started the drama activities! If Mrs. Brown asked me to do something, I would, but I never volunteered to do anything on my own. I liked to watch what other people were doing and sometimes I would copy their movements or say what they would say. I was very interested in Mrs. McLennan and would watch her from my place on the carpet. Sometimes I would wave and whisper the word "hello" to her. Once I became more comfortable with the new drama activities, I would share a few of my ideas. A few times I would wait until the very last activity before drama time was done and then I would put my hand up to act in the scene. I needed a lot of help from my friends and Mrs. Brown who told me what to say and do. I was still shy to work with a partner. It took me a long time to become comfortable, but once I was I smiled and

laughed a little bit as I acted. I looked around the room at what other kids were doing and I looked at lot at Mrs. McLennan to make sure she saw my acting.

Once I got used to the drama I began to act without being asked by my teacher. I shared my ideas and feelings with the rest of my class. I got to act as a grandpa in a scene at the end of the workshop! I was even able to help decide how the drama scene should end and help my friends with how they were acting. I helped with every activity!

A few times other kids did not like what I was doing and tried to get me to act a different way. I didn't want to and I told Raja that I wanted to act in my own way! I ignored what she was saying. I was happy with what I was doing. I always raised my hand to show my teacher I wanted to act in the drama scenes. When our class had to finish the drama early because it was picture day I was very upset. I did not leave the carpet and Mrs. Brown had to tell me to line up with the other kids. I walked very slowly to the class line, frowning the whole way. I slowly followed everyone out of the classroom and waved goodbye to Mrs. McLennan.

I felt very comfortable in the last few drama games. I participated in every activity. My hand was always up showing Mrs. Brown that I was interested in being a part of the activities. I had a chance to act in almost every single scene because not everyone wanted a turn and Mrs. Brown needed people for acting. When I was not acting I made sure that I was watching what other kids were doing and sharing my ideas for the different ways the drama scenes could end. I even had a chance to play a boy character again, acting as a little brother. I was also the man that ran the grocery store.



Matthew's self-portrait

Matthew

When my class first started the drama workshops, I had a lot of trouble focusing on what we were doing. I was usually distracted by the things around me like picking lint off the carpet, pulling my shirt over my face, playing with my shoe, holding my knees to my chest and rocking, or laying and rolling around on the carpet. When Mrs. Brown asked me questions I would sometimes answer her by saying things that didn't make sense. The only kid I usually talked to in our class is Ian. We like to whisper and giggle together during carpet time. Sometimes we fight too. This usually makes Mrs. Brown mad and she moves me to a new spot on the carpet away from Ian.

I participated in some of the first drama activities. I raised my hand to act in a scene and I shared a few of my ideas. By the end of the workshop though Mrs. Brown had to move me from the carpet because I was bothering others by covering my face with my hood and making very loud, strange noises.

I really liked the games in workshop four. I liked how we pretended to be playing ball games in the classroom. I was so excited when my Mrs. Brown explained what we were going to do that I had a big smile of my face. I tapped my feet and rocked back and forth while I waited for the activity to begin! I even answered some of my teacher's questions! After that I was not as active in the next workshop and instead sat back and

watched what everyone else was doing. I did not get in trouble once! I became upset when other students, like Ian, were yelling and making noises at others.

I was absent for a few days and when I came back to school I was not interested in the drama activities. I began to act up in class by throwing things around the carpet at other students, making faces, picking at my clothing and fingernails, and covering my face with the hood of my shirt. Mrs. Brown tried to help me by calling my name, standing next to me during activities, and giving me ideas for the drama, but it wasn't working. At the end of the workshop I was working on drawing my own picture instead of with my partner Inga. We fought over what picture we wanted to draw, so I drew my own instead.

I tried to bother the people sitting around me by making faces at them, sitting really, really close to them, and making silly noises. One of the activities was for us to draw a picture of when other people did not understand what I was saying. Instead I drew a picture of when I did not listen to others. For the last few drama workshops I got in a lot of trouble from Mrs. Brown for my behaviour, (for example covering my face with my shirt, making faces at others, making noises, touching others, etcetera) especially when I was pretending to hold guns in both my hands and shoot people on the carpet. At times I would shout out my ideas, especially during activities that were guessing games. By the end of the drama workshops I was no longer even watching what was happening. Instead I spent my time touching things around me on the carpet (for example the carpet, my clothing, the toy shelves next to the carpet area) or staring blankly across the room.



Naresh's self-portrait

Naresh

I was a little shy when we first started the drama activities. I did not really want to participate, but eventually I started to share my ideas with others. During the warm-ups I worked with my friends Hassan and Amar. We liked to see who could do the activities the best in our classroom. After the warm-ups and drama scenes, my class spent a lot of time talking about what we did. I always shared my ideas about what we did and what it reminded me of. I also liked to sit back and listen to what other kids were saying.

I started to become a little bit more comfortable around the fifth workshop. I helped act in three sociodrama scenes and even shared ideas for ways the scenes could end. I needed some help from Mrs. Brown and my friends with my acting. They gave me ideas for what to do and say. We needed a mom for the scene, but I did not want to be a mom and asked if I could be a dad instead. I also began to share some more of my ideas too. When I was acting I liked to look around the room to see what other kids were doing. I laughed and smiled a lot during the drama activities.

By the eighth workshop I was one of the busiest boys in the drama activities. I was relaxed and excited to share my ideas. I often answered Mrs. Brown's questions about the problems and solutions we were exploring. I even acted as a leader in some of the activities, showing my friends what to say and do and helping them to solve the problems. I asked the teacher if we could continue to play the drama activities during free play time later in the day.

By the end of the drama workshops I was so excited to participate in the activities! I raised my hand for almost everything. I also got to do lots of activities with Hassan, which was great. Many of my ideas were used in the sociodramas, especially different ways for the dramas to end or different ways the actors could solve the problems. Because my hand was up for every activity, Mrs. Brown couldn't always give me a turn because she said she wanted other students to have a turn too. When no one had their hand up, I always got to participate. When I couldn't act in a scene I called out my ideas for props and ways for my friends to act. I also had lots of ideas for the different ways the actors could act so they could solve their problems. At the end of the workshops I told my teacher that 'next time we have a problem we can think about what we did in circle and use those ideas.'



Nichole

Nichole's self-portrait

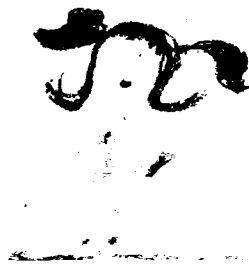
I was very shy when we first started the drama activities. I participated when I was asked to by my teacher, but did not do any actions or say any words on my own. I was more comfortable sitting back on the carpet and letting others answer Mrs. Brown's questions. After a few workshops I began to feel a little more comfortable and I decided to share a few of my ideas with the class about the different scenes we were acting out and how they could be solved by the characters.

I felt shy again after missing a day of school. I sat away from my friends on the carpet, and only participated in activities when Mrs. Brown asked me to. Once in a while

I would share a few of my ideas, but not very often. I was happy to be sitting quietly away from the others.

I became sick and missed the sixth, seventh, and eighth workshops. Once I came back to school I had a hard time acting in the activities. At one point Mrs. Brown asked me if I wanted to be an actor in one of the scenes, even though I did not have my hand up. I quickly said “no” and looked down at the floor. From that point on in the workshops I was very shy to participate in any of the activities, even the warm-ups that included everyone. I spent a lot of my time quietly watching what was happening and listening to the other kids. When we had to draw pictures at the end of the drama, I sat by myself for a very long time, drawing a picture of when I felt other people had misunderstood me. I stayed at the table drawing even after everyone else was finished their picture and had begun to play at free choice time.

By the end of the drama workshops I still was not participating in the drama games and activities. I did not interact with others unless Mrs. Brown asked me, however I did watch and listen to what others were doing around me. I was interested in what was happening, but not yet comfortable to participate.



Raja

Raja's self-portrait

I was very interested in Mrs. McLennan when she first came to our classroom. I made sure that I walked by her and said hi right away! I liked the idea of the drama and

was excited about what we would be doing. I liked to share my ideas. When I would talk in class, I would look over to see if Mrs. McLennan was watching and listening to me. At the end of the first few workshops, when Mrs. McLennan was leaving, I would run over to where she was, throw my arms around her and not let go until she promised to come back another time to visit our classroom.

During the first few workshops I was one of the most active girls in the class and helped with every discussion and almost every drama activity. I even shared my ideas for what I thought our drama scenes should be about and how I thought they should end. When it was time for music class and we had to stop what we were doing, I was very upset and told Mrs. Brown! I did not think it was fair to stop drama just because it was time for music!

I liked to work with Inga during many of the activities. We both were very excited about the activities and worked well together. Sometimes we would have so much energy! When we worked together we would laugh and give each other ideas for what to do like, "Move your arms like this!", "Jump!", "That's good", and "Wow".

I played in almost every activity by the fifth and sixth workshops. I was not just working on my own actions, but helping others too in the drama scenes. I would try and give other kids ideas for what to do (for example "Farhani, start now!", "Stop, don't do it like that") and I liked to suggest different actions for the dramas so the scenes could end in different ways. Workshop six had to end early too, and I was upset that we had to go to music class again instead of finishing our drama work. I made sure I told Mrs. Brown this.

Sometimes I became so excited in the drama workshops that I shouted out my ideas before my teacher could call my name. Sometimes I yelled my ideas across the room at other students. I often smiled or laughed with my friends that were sitting close to me. I also shared a lot of my ideas by talking with others. Sometimes I tried to boss people in the drama scenes who I felt needed help or weren't doing a good enough job. I would say things like, "turn around Madalynn," "don't do that," or "you need to change something different about yourself". Sometimes I would whisper things for people to say when they could not think of anything to do or say, or I would give them ideas for how to start their scenes or what props to use. I did this even when I was not acting in the scene. More workshops had to end early and I was so disappointed! I frowned as Mrs. Brown explained why the drama had to stop and after, when we were supposed to be lining up, I walked next to her and tugged at her shirt trying to let her see how disappointed I was!

I was the most active girl actor in the last workshop. I was most interested in talking about and then acting ideas that were happening to my friends at home and in our classroom. Even when I was not acting out the scene, I liked to talk about it as I watched it from the carpet. I even acted like a man grocery store manager in the last scene. When I acted in these scenes I did not need any help from my Mrs. Brown. I used props and made up the talking parts. When we talked about the acting I told Mrs. Brown, "I will use the ideas when I fight with my sister." I was so sad when the workshops ended. I ran over to Mrs. McLennan when she was leaving to hug her. I would not let go!

Kinder/caring: The Sociodramatic Experiences

1: The First Structured Classroom Drama Experience

The organized, highly structured classroom is reflected in student participation in workshop one activities. It is evident that students are aware of my presence in their classroom, pausing occasionally during conversation with others to look at me from across the room. Many students appear shy and apprehensive in the drama activities, choosing to observe a few of their peers instead of participating themselves. It is immediately evident that a very high expectation exists for proper student behaviour in the classroom as many students sit in identical positions, cautiously raising their hands when they wish to speak and glancing repeatedly in my direction throughout the duration of the workshop.

Each of the eleven Senior Kindergarten students sits in a circle formation around the learning carpet. Their teacher sits in front of them, perched on a rocking chair. At the conclusion of the opening activities, she welcomes them to the carpet and invites them to look at me and say hello.

“This is Mrs. McLennan,” she says. “Mrs. McLennan is going to be with us for twelve circles. She has planned lots of fun things for us to do, drama activities, and she’s going to watch us as we do them. She’s working on a project and she’s going to be writing down what we do. Can you say hello to Mrs. McLennan?”

The children chime in unison “Hello Mrs. McLennan!” Some of them stare with wide, intrigued eyes at me; others look shyly from underneath lowered eyelashes.

“We’re going to play a game to start,” Mrs. Brown says. “Everyone needs to stand up and find a spot in the classroom”. The students get up from their spots on the carpet and wander around until Mrs. Brown calls out the word “freeze.” “You need to listen carefully,” she says. “When I call out a certain colour, like yellow, you need to walk over to the carpet and freeze in one spot. If you’re not wearing that colour, you should keep walking around the room until you hear the next colour. Do you understand?”

Some of the students nod their head in understanding. "Okay...start walking!" Mrs. Brown exclaims. Students begin to walk around the room. Farhani, Amar, Naresh and Inga begin to giggle. Raja walks by me and says "Hello Mrs. McLennan" in a low, sly voice. Lots of excited chatter and giggling can be heard from students as they mill around in anticipation.

"Yellow!" calls their teacher. Nichole comes quickly over to the carpet, sits down and freezes in her spot. "Yellow!" Ian calls out, pointing to a poster on the wall. Amar yells out "No! Yellow on you!" Amar points to a bit of yellow on his shoes, showing Ian the colour yellow and then proceeds to the carpet where he joins Nichole. Mrs. Brown continues to call out colours until every student is sitting or standing on the carpet in a frozen tableau. "Nice job!" she congratulates them. She walks over to the carpet and sits in her rocking chair. "Story bunch," she calls and the students all snuggle up close to her, all except for Matthew who sits slightly farther behind the rest of the students, looking around the room and not at his teacher.

"I have a story that I'm going to read you," Mrs. Brown explains. "We read it a long time ago, near the beginning of the year. I'm going to read it to you again so we can do some drama activities about it this week. Does anyone remember what this book is called and who the author is?" she asks as she holds the book up high in front of students.

Naresh raises his hand and Mrs. Brown calls on him to answer. "We Share Everything?" he responds.

"Great! Good memory!" Mrs. Brown praises. "Anyone remember the author's name?" Amar waves his hand wildly in the air.

"Robert Munsch!" he calls out.

“Very good!” Mrs. Brown responds. Mrs. Brown begins to read the story to students. Students appear to be listening intently to the reading, all except for Matthew who is now picking at his fingernails and looking aimlessly around the room. Mrs. Brown reads until the part in the story when one of the main characters, Jeremiah, yells at another student. Many of the students chime in and make a yelling “OW!” sound along with the character. At other times, students chant familiar phrases at the correct spot in the story, like “We Share Everything” and “Now look!” At one point in the story Ian is so excited that he begins to clap his hands and yell, “YES!” in response to what Mrs. Brown has read. Half-way through the story Dana crosses her arms and stares across the room at me with a blank expression on her face. Farhani glances over at me, laughing and smiling and raising his eyes in response to Jeremiah and Amanda sharing their clothing in the story. Mrs. Brown concludes the story and begins to explain the instructions for the next activity. Farhani continues to look over in my direction, smiling.

“There were a lot of feelings and emotions in this story,” Mrs. Brown tells students.

“We have a song about feelings!’ Raja shouts out.

“We do! Maybe we can sing it if we have time” Mrs. Brown responds. “In this story, the two main characters, Jeremiah and Amanda had trouble sharing with each other. I wonder if you can think about your own life and tell me about something you might have shared with someone else.” Inga puts up her hand and Mrs. Brown calls on her.

“ Ummm...I like to share books,” she says.

“Good idea!” Mrs. Brown praises as she writes the word ‘books’ on a large piece of chart paper. Raja calls out her idea.

“We can share things and we can share toys.” She looks around the classroom. “We can share the toy garage.” A few of the boys murmur at the sound of the word garage. Matthew raises his hand.

“Yes Matthew?” Mrs. Brown asks.

“We can share toys,” he says.

“What kind of toys?” Mrs. Brown asks.

“Animals,” he responds.

Ian suddenly yells “Ahhhhhh!” in a loud voice.

“Yes Ian, Ahhhh from the story,” Mrs. Brown acknowledges.

Madalynn shouts out “We share the number chart!” and Mrs. Brown scribes it on the chart paper along with the other students’ ideas.

Farhani puts up his hand and Mrs. Brown calls on him, but he does not have an answer ready. He looks in my direction with a serious look on his face. Nichole puts up her hand. Mrs. Brown calls on her.

“We share the flowers in the house center,” she says. Mrs. Brown writes this on the paper as the rest of the class looks on. Each of the boys has their hand up while all the girls sit and watch Mrs. Brown.

Amar calls out “We share the trains,” and Mrs. Brown writes this on chart paper.

Farhani remembers his word from earlier and puts his hand up. Mrs. Brown calls on him and he says “pointers”, referring to the magic wands that students use when they count numbers on the calendar together. At this point there are no more hands in the air

so Mrs. Brown rereads all the suggestions written on chart paper and the students follow along. Matthew is not attending and is instead lying on his belly and picking lint off the carpet. Mrs. Brown prompts him by calling his name.

“That’s great,” Mrs. Brown says in response to the reading. “I wonder if you can tell me how you feel when you share with someone or when someone shares with you?”

Amar says, “I feel sad when friends do not share with me.”

“Happy!’ Inga calls out.

“You feel happy when your friends share with you?” Mrs. Brown questions. Inga shakes her head yes.

“I feel surprised when friends share,” Naresh states.

Madalynn slowly raises her hand and Mrs. Brown calls her name. “I feel shy when new friends play with me,” she says.

“Yes,” says Mrs. Brown. “You might feel shy when a new friend plays with you. That’s a good one!”

Matthew slowly puts his hand up. Mrs. Brown calls on him. “Sleepy,” he says.

“You feel sleepy?” she asks.

“Sleepy if you don’t sleep,” Matthew responds.

“What if someone shares with you?” Mrs. Brown prompts.

“Sleeeeeeeepy,” Matthew draws the word out and then puts his fingers in his mouth. He watches Mrs. Brown write the word sleepy on the chart paper.

Naresh raises his hand. “You can feel mad if no one shares with you,” he says.

Inga, attempting to explain Matthew’s response calls out “You feel tired if you are sharing so much.”

“That’s great!” says Mrs. Brown. She rereads the list of emotions on the paper.

“We’ve got a few minutes before activity time, so we can play our feeling song.” Some of the students clap their hands. Mrs. Brown walks over to the CD player and finds the appropriate CD. She starts the music and the students sit around the edge of the carpet, singing along to the music and making the appropriate facial expressions to accompany the sung emotion.

2: Slowly Becoming Comfortable...

As students appeared to become more comfortable with my presence in the classroom, they slowly engaged within the sociodrama activities. Their limited experience and exposure to dramatic activities is evident their cautious role-playing of the simple stories. Regardless of their teacher's prompts and encouragement, students appeared tentative and needing reassurance in their involvement in and responses to the drama. Due to the time constraints of the students' scheduled activities, the workshop was concluded before students were ready and all activities could be completed.

"Mrs. McLennan is with us again," Mrs. Brown says to the class and gestures towards me. "Can you remind me of what we did yesterday?" Raja puts up her hand. "Yes Raja?"

"We walked around the room and when you called the colours we walked around and if you called the colours we walked to the carpet."

"Good memory Raja!" Mrs. Brown commends. "That's exactly what we did!" Raja smiles. "Today we are going to do another walking activity, but you really need to listen so you know what to do when you're walking. You're going to walk around the room. I'm going to call out the name of a body part, like your elbow or your toes or your nose, and when I do, you need to stop moving and try to touch those body parts together." The students are listening raptly, with the exception of Matthew who is squirming around on the carpet. Mrs. Brown calls his name to get his attention. "Okay," called Mrs. Brown. "Everyone stand up and start walking. Let's go!" Students begin to walk around the room, some giggling and whispering to each other. Matthew and Ian remain on the carpet and their teacher encourages their participation by asking them to begin to walk around. Mrs. Brown begins to call out directions. "Hands and knees together. Elbow and knee. Nose, knees and thumb. Forehead, fingers, and toes." The directions become more complex and students giggle as they attempt to stretch their bodies and touch parts.

“Everyone can do it! Ohhhh....this is too easy!” Nichole calls out to Mrs. Brown. Hassan needs to be redirected as he has wandered off to the house center and has started to touch materials in it while his peers are walking around. Madalynn is observed to be looking around the room at her peers and hesitating in her movements. She begins to copy the movements of the students closest to her.

“Hello Mrs. McLennan,” Inga says coyly as she saunters past me. Hassan and Amar are standing side by side at the back of the classroom in what appears to be a private competition to see who can enact the complex movements first. Amar yells, “I got it! I got it!” as he beats Hassan in creating the pose. Mrs. Brown calls all the students back to the carpet and the students sit down. Ian and Matthew are standing beside each other, laughing and squirming around. Mrs. Brown walks over and redirects their behaviour. Everyone is now sitting on the carpet.

“Tell me about that activity,” Mrs. Brown asks.

“That was so easy!” says Naresh.

“Easy!” parrot Amar, Inga and Raja at the same time.

“We are going to listen to another story now,” says Mrs. Brown. “Matthew please move away from Ian. Listen carefully to the story because we’re going to act out some of the parts when we’re done reading.” After Mrs. Brown reads the story *We Share Everything* she displays a paintbrush, a cup, some blocks and a book to the students. She explains that the students are going to be doing some acting and asks them what all the objects are.

“They’re props! Paintbrushes!” answers Naresh. Raja raises her hand and Mrs. Brown calls on her.

“Jeremiah and Amanda were painting in the story,” Raja says. Mrs. Brown invites Dana to move closer to the group, as she has inched her way backwards, away from everyone and towards the back of the carpet. Ian is making silly noises and Mrs. Brown calls his name to refocus his attention.

“Tell me about the story,” Mrs. Brown asks.

Farhani raises his hand and Mrs. Brown calls his name. “The tower is taller than him,” he says, referring to Jeremiah in the story. Ian claps his hand and calls out “yes!” As Mrs. Brown questions students, Raja looks towards me in a quizzical manner, laughing and smiling and raising her eyes.

“Who are the characters in the story?” Mrs. Brown questions.

“Jeremiah,” says Inga.

“Amanda” calls out Nichole.

“Don’t forget the teacher,” reminds Raja.

“We need some volunteers to help us act out some of the situations in the story,” explains Mrs. Brown. “Who would like to be Amanda?” Amar puts up his hand and some of the other children giggle. He shyly puts it back down. He puts his hand back up and then says, “I’ll be Jeremiah.” All the girls’ hands are up, volunteering to be Amanda. Mrs. Brown chooses Inga. Nichole volunteers to be the teacher. Ian is squirming in his seat and making noises. Mrs. Brown redirects him again.

All three students, Amar, Inga and Nichole stand motionless in front of their peers, staring at their teacher. The students in the audience begin to chat amongst themselves. The actors are still motionless. Mrs. Brown reminds them to think about the

problems Jeremiah and Amanda had in the story. Matthew becomes distracted on the carpet and Mrs. Brown redirects him. Mrs. Brown asks the spectators for help.

Dana raises her hand and says, "They fought over the book." The actors are still motionless and Mrs. Brown leads them through the scene.

"Remember, Jeremiah had the book first in the story and then Amanda came over to take it away from him because she wanted it. Amar, pretend that you are looking at the book. That's right, pick up the book and hold it. Inga, you come over and take the book from Amar. Good." The students slowly and with much prompting follow Mrs. Brown's directions, slowly portraying the first scene in the book. They are not really acting in role, but instead following their teachers' directions for movements and parroting the words she is saying to them. This is the first time they have ever participated in a dramatic, role-played scene in front of their peers. Slowly the scene is acted out and the relieved students return to their spots on the carpet.

"Great!" praises Mrs. Brown. "Let's act out another problem from the story. Ian volunteers to be Jeremiah, Raja becomes Amanda and Dana wants to be the teacher. All three students stand in front of their peers. Ian moves directly into character, immediately going over to the building center to get blocks so that he can start building a tower. Raja comes barreling over and begins to knock down Ian's tower.

"Give me those blocks!" shouts Raja in character as Amanda.

Ian yells, "NO!" Neither of these students needed any encouragement from their teacher in their portrayal of this scene. Farhani, Matthew and Amar begin to shout out suggestions to the actors.

“Grab the blocks back! You need to share! Oh!” Ian begins to laugh at the audience members and his teacher reminds him to focus on what he is doing. Dana tentatively looks over at her teacher and slowly walks over to Ian and Amanda.

“You need to share,” she quietly says.

“Nice work!” Mrs. Brown calls out. “Everyone come back to the carpet.”

“Mrs. Brown,” she whispers. “I was supposed to be Amanda.” Mrs. Brown does not respond and it is unclear if she heard Dana.

For the third scene in the story all the boys are now volunteering to act out the role of Jeremiah, all have their hands in the air to indicate their interest. All of the girls are also volunteering to be Amanda. No one wants to be the teacher. Hassan is chosen to be Jeremiah and Madalynn volunteers to be Amanda. No one wants to be the teacher and Inga eventually volunteers for the role. This time the acting appears to be a little smoother as the students portray the third argument between Jeremiah and Amanda in the story. The actors require the least amount of prompting from Mrs. Brown and many of the audience members, especially Farhani and Naresh watch from the audience, appearing greatly interested in the dramatic action. As Hassan and Madalynn fight over the painting center, Inga marches over in role.

“You two NEED to share!” she proclaims with a dramatic smile. Mrs. Brown laughs as the scene ends. The students return to the carpet.

“Boys and girls, you really like to act,” Mrs. Brown says and looks at Dana. “There is acting in the house center. Maybe you can act out with your friends there.” Matthew begins to bother the student sitting next to him and Mrs. Brown redirects him.

“We acted out lots of problems in the story,” explains Mrs. Brown. “How do you think the characters in the story could have solved some of their problems?” None of the students respond to her question. Mrs. Brown continues, “Think of the fight over the book. How could Amanda and Jeremiah have solved their problem instead of pulling on the book?”

Inga raises her hand. “They could look at the book together.”

“They could have just took turns,” Naresh answers.

“They can get another book,” says Nichole.

Madalynn volunteers an answer. “They can both read one page and then give it to the other person.”

Inga raises her hand again. “They could take turns and make a circle and read three pages each and then the other person reads three pages.”

Raja calls out “Or we could get the teacher.” Mrs. Brown stops the conversation to call Matthew’s name. He is putting his hood over his face. Raja raises her hand again.

“They could build a tower together,” she says.

Inga repeats Raja’s suggestion. “They could build together.” At this point in the morning the students need to proceed to music class, as it’s the classroom teacher’s preparation time. Mrs. Brown ends the discussion and asks the students to begin lining up at the door so they can proceed to the music room.

3: Lots of Interest, A Little Acting...

In this workshop students appeared more comfortable sharing their ideas and responding to questions. There was much interest in acting in the sociodrama scenes, but once students were ready to act, they appeared unsure of what to say and do, often relying on each other or their teacher for prompting and encouragement. Many of the same students volunteered to act in multiple sociodrama scenes.

Students are sitting cross-legged on the carpet, each one facing towards Mrs.

Brown with their hands in their lap. Mrs. Brown asks them, “Do you remember what we’ve been talking about the last few circles we’ve had together?” Raja raises hand and Mrs. Brown calls her name.

“Sharing,” she answers.

“Right!” says Mrs. Brown. “We’ve been talking about sharing.”

Madalynn raises hand and Mrs. Brown calls her name. “The title of the book was *We Share Everything*,” she shares. Teacher looks at Matthew, points to another spot on the carpet and says, “Matthew, move over and Ian, please move over here.” Both boys were not attending to what has happening in the discussion, resulting in their move to a new spot on the carpet.

“We’re going to talk about sharing and problems when you’ve had trouble sharing. Think about something at activity time here at school or maybe at home with your brothers and sisters,” Mrs. Brown explains after Ian and Matthew move to their new places on the carpet.

Hassan raises his hand first and teacher calls his name. “One time my brother Hasa and cousins Blia and Visah were walking, and we had this toy, and we started to fight and we got angry. My brother took the toy and we got angry. We took the toy and then we started to fight – my mom put it on the fridge and she allowed no one to play

with it.” He gestures with his hands as he talks about the toy and the fight. Mrs. Brown writes what he is saying on a piece of chart paper as he is telling the story to his peers.

“Okay who would like to volunteer to help act out this story?” Mrs. Brown asks the class. Hassan, Amar, Matthew and Farhani raise their hand. Raja, the only girl to volunteer, slowly puts up her hand. “Hassan, Amar, Matthew, Farhani and Raja, you can stand up in front and we’ll help you act out Hassan’s story,” she directs. The five students rise from their spots on the carpet and stand in front of the rest of the class, staring at their teacher. Mrs. Brown hands a toy for a prop to Matthew. Everyone is silent. Matthew stares down at the toy. Their faces are expressionless.

Finally Matthew says to Mrs. Brown, “Pretend we broke the legs off this toy.” This prompts the other boys to begin grabbing at the toy in Matthew’s hand and Hassan begins to narrate the events and how people should act in their role.

“First Bliia had the toy and then he gave it to Visah. Matthew’s the big brother so he should have it first,” Hassan explains. The other boys in the scene begin to make some movements towards the toy and as if they are fighting, but no one is speaking except for Hassan. Raja, in role as the mother, is watching what is happening from afar. The boys continue to grab the toy from each other’s hands.

Mrs. Brown prompts Raja. “What did the mother do in Hassan’s story?” she asks. Raja tentatively walks over to the boys and pulls the toy out of Hassan’s hand. She does not say anything.

“Does the mom say anything?” Mrs. Brown prompts.

Hassan looks at Raja and says, "She says don't touch it ever again!" Raja is still silent. She holds the toy in her hands and looks towards her teacher with a blank face. The boys in the scene begin to giggle and look towards their teacher.

Mrs. Brown stands from her chair and asks the students, "What could they have done differently so the toy didn't end up on the fridge? They were arguing and they were pulling and the mom had to come and put it away so let's think of other solutions."

Amar raises his hand and Mrs. Brown calls his name. "One time my friend came over and asked if we wanted to play something and I said no because it made a big mess, and then I said okay, okay and we played with it."

"That's great, but how can we solve Hassan's problem?" Amar frowns and looks over at Hassan.

Nichole tentatively raises her hand and the teacher calls her name. "We could take turns," she says. "One person could be first, then second, then third, then fourth."

Hassan calls out, "We could just all play with it and pretend that anyone could use it."

Raja raises her hand and Mrs. Brown calls her name. "One person can play with the toy and another person can play with another toy and then they can put a time thingy and then when a sound comes out of it, when the bell rings, then they need to switch toys and the next person could have a turn," she suggests. Matthew becomes distracted and begins to play with Nichole's feet. Mrs. Brown notices and redirects him by asking him to stop touching. Mrs. Brown asks for volunteers to act out the solutions that the group brainstormed. The same students as before volunteer. The group decides that Nichole's suggestion of taking turns is going to be explored first. Hassan, Farhani, Matthew, Amar,

and Raja stand at the front of their peers without dialogue or movement. They stare at their teacher. Hassan passes the toy back and between his left and right hand.

Amar whispers to Hassan, "Take turns....pass it over."

"What?" Hassan questions. He notices Amar gesturing for the toy and passes it over to him. The boys look confused and the toy is passed from person to person. Matthew becomes very distracted and begins to pull his shirt over his face. Mrs. Brown removes him from the scene and Ian volunteers to take his place.

Mrs. Brown prompts the students. "You have a toy...you have to think. How can you share?" The boys pause for a moment and then begin to pass it amongst the group, calling each person's name as they pass it back and forth. They call out real names, not the names of the people in the Hassan's original scene, as if they have transformed into their true selves playing in their own classroom. The boys begin to giggle and the toy is passed around faster and faster.

Mrs. Brown asks, "Are they pulling like the last story? Is the mom coming over upset?" She gestures towards Raja, prompting her to enter the scene. Raja appears confused and unsure of what to do. She stares at Mrs. Brown who gestures for her to walk over to the group of boys. Raja slowly begins to walk over to the group of boys. She stands silently in front of them. Mrs. Brown addresses Raja in role, "Did you have to take the toy away Mom?"

"No," Raja shyly replies. The students stop their scene and continue to laugh and smile. They appear more confident than they did in the first scene. Mrs. Brown invites them to return to the carpet.

Farhani raises his hand and Mrs. Brown calls his name. "We should play a game with the toy. But not with the timer," he says. Hassan, Farhani, Matthew, Amar, and Raja raise their hands to volunteer to act out this scene. Madalynn, Nichole and Dana are silent observers of the drama, not volunteering to interact in the role-playing or discussion. The boys stand in front of their peers.

Matthew holds the toy in his hand. He gestures towards Farhani. "Here Farhani, play with it," he says as he passes the toy to Farhani.

Farhani takes the toy and twirls it in his hand for a moment. He looks at Amar and says, "Here Amar, play with it." He puts it in Amar's outstretched hand.

"Thanks," replies Amar. He makes animal noises and holds the toy above his head as though it was flying in the air. He passes the toy to Hassan. The boys take turns passing the toy back and forth to each other, making lots of loud animal noises. The boys who are not holding the toy still make the animal noises. The toy is passed back and forth, back and forth. Raja, who watches the action from a few steps away does not make any movements or speak any words.

"What about the timer? We need to talk about the time," Mrs. Brown questions from the carpet.

Matthew responds to Mrs. Brown. "Pretend to play with the toy I can't see. We're playing for fifteen minutes." The boys start to pass the toy back and forth but slower than the previous scene and without the animal noises.

"I see you're switching but I don't know how," Mrs. Brown says. Farhani leaves the scene and walks across the room to the house center where he grabs a toy clock. Mrs. Brown calls out to Farhani, "Give me the timer and I'll help you make it ding." Matthew

continues to hold the toy in his hand. The boys are standing next to him, watching him with the toy. Raja is now sitting on the floor next to Mrs. Brown. She makes a 'ding' noise with her mouth. Matthew passes the toy to another boy. Raja waits a few seconds and makes another "ding" sound. The toy is passed to Farhani. He plays with the toy for another moment and then Raja makes another sound. Farhani passes the toy to Amar. Mrs. Brown asks the students to return to the carpet. Students are now sitting randomly on the carpet with their legs crossed, looking at their teacher.

"Does anyone have another story for us of when they were at their house and had a hard time sharing?" Mrs. Brown asks. Students become very noisy and many students attempt to share ideas at once. "It's hard to hear when everyone is talking at the same time," Mrs. Brown reminds them.

Raja raises her hand and Mrs. Brown calls her name. "One time my sister Rija got some colours [markers] at a party and she wasn't sharing them with me. And my mom said that the colours would go away in a few weeks, and I went away, but she still didn't listen. Then she listened to my mom and then I could use them."

"Who do we need to act out Raja's story? Who are our characters?" Mrs. Brown prompts the students. Raja, Madalynn and Dana put up their hands to volunteer to act the scene out. Mrs. Brown hands out markers for props. Madalynn asks Mrs. Brown to reread the scribed sentence (Rija had markers from a party. She would not share with Raja. Mom told Rija to share but she would not listen.) and Mrs. Brown rereads it.

"How shall we start?" questions Raja to the other girls.

"From the beginning," answers Dana.

Madalynn points to Raja and says, "You have to ask me if you can share."

“Can I share?” asks Raja.

Madalynn yells, “NO!” Raja looks at Dana, who is in role as the mother.

Dana walks over to Madalynn and says, “You need to share.”

Madalynn yells again, “NO!” At this point, each of the three girls look towards their teacher and stop all dialogue and movement. They remain standing in front of their peers.

“Let’s think about how we can solve this problem then,” Mrs. Brown prompts the students.

Raja spontaneously calls out from her spot in the drama, “After a few days she did share,” referring to her sister Rija in the original scene. She appears to step into role again, looks towards Madalynn and says, “Can I use your markers now?”

“Yeah,” Madalynn replies.

“I didn’t need to help them this time,” Dana says to her teacher.

“That was fun,” Raja says to her teacher as the girls sit back on the carpet. Mrs. Brown reminds students that it’s time for music class and asks them to form a line at the classroom door.

“But I have another idea,” Amar says as he walks towards the door.

Mrs. Brown looks towards me and says, “They are so into this that they don’t want to stop when it’s time to stop. But we have to stop because it’s music time.”

4: Getting a Little More Comfortable

Students appeared to become more comfortable in the activities. They seem to be progressing in their dramatic abilities. Sometimes the expectations of their traditional environment and program appear to inhibit students in their actions, repressing risk-taking and spontaneous participation in activities as students wait to raise their hands to make suggestions instead of engaging in spontaneous discussion.

Students are sitting on the carpet waiting for their teacher's instructions.

"I'm waiting for everyone to stop and listen," she says. She looks over at Ian who is squirming around in his spot. Matthew is seated proudly next to her, sitting in the special 'star of the day' chair. Mrs. Brown redirects Ian, asking him to stop moving and look at her.

"Okay," says Mrs. Brown. "Let's all stand up in a circle. I'm going to pretend to throw a ball toward you. What would you do if I actually did throw toward ball at you?"

Inga raises her hand and Mrs. Brown calls on her. "Catch it," she answers.

"Right!" Mrs. Brown says. She begins to mime the action of throwing a ball to Inga. Inga pretends to catch the ball and throws it back to Mrs. Brown. "Let's get into pairs," she directs students. "You're each going to play ball with one another." Students stand up and mill around the carpet. Mrs. Brown assists them in getting into pairs.

Suddenly, Hassan starts to cry. "What's wrong?" asks Mrs. Brown. He does not reply. He sits down on the carpet, holding his face in his hands. Tears stream down his face.

Naresh is sitting next to him and looks in my direction while saying "He does that," as if to explain Hassan's surprising behaviour. Ian runs over to the tissue box near the classroom sink and brings Hassan back a tissue. Mrs. Brown asks Hassan again to explain what is wrong and he remains silent. She then turns away from him.

"Okay," Mrs. Brown says. "Let's get into pairs. Start throwing those balls."

Amar walks over to Hassan and stands next to him, becoming his partner. Hassan says

nothing. Most pairs begin to start their ball games, some in a coordinated fashion taking turns catching and throwing the ball to each other (for example Raja and Inga, Farhani and Madalynn), and other students who are oblivious of their partners, throwing the ball randomly and not working as a team (Dana and Matthew, Ian and Naresh). Amar stands helplessly as Hassan continues to lie on the carpet and cry. Mrs. Brown walks over to him and whispers in his ear. He whispers back asking if he can sit on a chair next to me. Mrs. Brown becomes Amar's new partner.

Students are starting to make lots of noise as their activities progress. Mrs. Brown calls out suggestions for ball games (for example basketball, tennis, ping pong) and encourages students to try different ones. Whole bodies begin to move, not just arms and fingers as students begin to jump from side to side and use more body parts in their movements. Madalynn appears a little tentative at first, but is soon drawn into the excitement of the activity and her partner Farhani's encouragement. Dana is jumping around from spot to spot, oblivious of her partner Matthew and his attempts to throw a ball to her. He eventually plays by himself. Ian is moving in a very uncoordinated manner and not attending to or cooperating with Naresh, despite Naresh's prompts. Inga and Raja move in a coordinated manner, their facing showing their concentration as they move in sync, passing the imaginary ball back and forth. Farhani and Madalynn are now verbally planning as they play their game. Farhani tells Madalynn that he is going to have the ball first, bounce it and then throw it to her. Hassan watches the children from his chair next to me. I ask him if he wants to join the group and he says no, that his stomach hurts. Lots of laughter and noise is heard in the room. Students yell out instructions such as "I have the ball", "I'll throw it to you", and "I caught it, I caught it!" In their movements

students have become spread around the room. Mrs. Brown asks them to stop the game after approximately five minutes and return to the carpet. Once they are gathered as a group again, she leads them through a reading of Mayer's (1983) *I Was So Mad*. At the conclusion of the reading, Mrs. Brown hands each student a musical instrument from the music center (for example shakers, sticks, a miniature drum, a tambourine, sandpaper rubs, etcetera).

"We're going to create a soundscape for our book," she explains as she continues to hand out the instruments.

"What's that?" calls out Inga.

"A soundscape is when we create lots of different sounds as we think of something or someplace. We're going to create a soundscape to go along with our book, *I Was So Mad* (Mayer, 1983). I'm going to read the story and as I read you're going to create sounds or music to accompany what I am saying. If the character is happy, you create happy sounds with your instruments. If a character is sad in the story, you create sad sounds with your instruments. Let's practice. Everyone make a happy sound." The students begin to individually play their instruments in a light, giggling way. Lots of instruments are held above their musicians' heads.

"Okay," calls Mrs. Brown. "Let me hear an angry sound." Some students begin to laugh and a crescendo of loud, fast musical sounds fill the room. Students move their instruments faster and faster. "Now a sad sound," says Mrs. Brown. Some students keep their sounds the same as the angry request; others slow the tempo of their shaking down a bit. Hassan is still sitting next to me and Mrs. Brown asks if he would like an instrument. He shakes his head yes and Mrs. Brown hands him one. He remains sitting next to me on

the chair. Farhani raises his hand to request a different instrument; he appears unhappy with the original one he chose. Ian is very, very excited and gestures to others by holding the instrument high in the air. Mrs. Brown asks them to stop making music so she can begin the story. A few students are still making noises and Matthew yells for quiet. Mrs. Brown looks at him but says nothing.

Mrs. Brown begins reading the story, and each time the character participates in an action (for example walking, running) or an emotion (for example angry, sad) the students make different noises with their instruments to represent these, the height of music as the story reaches its peak. Towards the end of the story I notice Dana watching Hassan, who is still sitting on the chair next to me, participating by playing his instrument. Dana raises her hand.

“It’s too noisy here,” she explains to Mrs. Brown. “My ears are really sore. Can I move to another spot on the carpet?”

“Yes,” replies Mrs. Brown. Dana stands up and walks across the classroom to a table furthest from the carpet. She sits down and puts the instrument on the table, covering her ears with her hands. For the remainder of the drama activity Dana remains at the table playing with her instrument, covering her ears, or looking around the classroom. Mrs. Brown continues to read the story. Lots of students are smiling, everyone except for Dana is actively participating. Naresh and Farhani are really shaking their instruments by using both hands and holding them over their head. Ian becomes silly with his instrument and Mrs. Brown calls his name. With each action or emotion the music is played for longer and longer. Inga is looking around at all her peers. Madalynn appears to become more confident as the story progresses. Ian focuses again and is ready, grinning with

anticipation. Matthew is sitting with his legs crossed, expertly playing his instrument.

The story finally ends and the student spontaneously clap.

“That was wonderful!” praises Mrs. Brown. “One at a time, let’s put our instruments back in the music box,” and she calls each student one by one by name so that they can return their instruments.

5: The Sociodramatic Action Finally Begins!

The warm-up activity was a huge success, with most students participating spontaneously in the actions. Many students engaged actively in the sociodrama work, suggesting issues for exploration through role-play and alternative actions or responses to rectify the issues. Student participation and interest appeared high and much less encouragement and prompting from Mrs. Brown was observed. Some students demonstrate a high degree of risk-taking as they explored acting in role for the first time as a character of a different age or gender.

The students are very energetic today, engaging in lively discussion on the carpet as they wait for the workshop to begin. Ian, Inga, Raja and Matthew come over to say hi to me. Mrs. Brown calls them over as she is ready to begin the workshop. As she is welcoming them to school, she needs to stop and redirect Matthew who is pulling the hood on his sweatshirt over his face. Dana is giggling at Matthew's antics. Mrs. Brown attempts to begin the lesson a second time as a fight breaks out between Matthew and Ian over a book that Ian was looking at that needed to be put away. Both boys tug on the book and Mrs. Brown interjects, asking them to sit apart from one another. Each boy glares at the other as Ian slowly makes his way to the bookshelf.

"Okay," calls out Mrs. Brown. "Everyone close their eyes and think of their favourite animal. Don't say the name of the animal. Think of what it looks like and what it does and what noises it might make. Where does it live and what does it eat? Can you act like your favourite animal? Don't say its name. Open your eyes. Who can act out their animal?" Farhani raises his hand. "Okay Farhani!" says Mrs. Brown.

Farhani stands up and begins to walk around, scratching his belly with both hands. The children begin to laugh at him. "I can make the noise too!" he says.

"Do it!" calls out Mrs. Brown.

Farhani begins to make a noise as he walks around scratching himself.

"He's a monkey!" yells Matthew.

“YES!” yells Farhani and he sits down. Madalynn volunteers to go next.

“It’s something that has two hands around,” she says as she walks on her hands and knees around the carpet and meows.

“Cat!” yells Ian.

“Yes,” answers Madalynn. Suddenly every student’s hand is up to volunteer to act out an animal, including Farhani who has already had a turn. Hassan is chosen to go next. He stands up and smiles widely. He rolls his eyes upward in thought.

“What does a wolf do?” he whispers to Mrs. Brown, but not softly enough. Mrs. Brown answers him by making a howling sound. Hassan stands in the same spot and echoes Mrs. Brown’s sound.

“A wolf!” Dana answers and she volunteers to go next. She lowers herself so she is on all fours, close to the ground. She begins to walk around, panting her tongue and making barking sounds.

“A rabbit!” Ian calls out. Dana shakes her head in disagreement and continues acting.

Naresh yells out “puppy” and Dana nods her head yes. Matthew asks to go next. He hops across the entire carpet, using large jumps and makes ‘rib bit’ noises. Ian yells out the word frog.

Amar goes next. He walks to the center of the carpet and begins to laugh. He stretches tall and then uses his closed fists to beat his chest. He’s smiling and looking at his peers and so excited that he yells the word gorilla before anyone has a chance to guess.

Next it's Inga's turn. She takes delicate little baby steps around the carpet, holding her arms close to her body at each side and sticking just the fingers out. She teeter-totters left-right, left-right as she walks.

"A penguin! A penguin!" Naresh yells. "That was easy!"

Ian begins to crawl around the carpet on his hands and knees, stopping at each person to bark at them.

"He's a dog," Farhani informs the students sitting around him.

"We already did that!" Dana calls out to Ian.

"Yes! Yes!" Ian claps his hands. "You got it!" he says to Farhani.

Naresh is the next student to have a turn. He crawls around the carpet in a slow manner. His movements are very detailed and precise. He has a look of sheer concentration on his face.

"Are you a turtle?" asks Amar.

"A snake?" calls out Madalynn. Naresh is still moving as his animal.

"A fish...I know it's a fish," states Amar.

"No," says Naresh as he breaks his concentration to address the incorrect guess.

"A fish?" repeats Hassan, unaware that Amar just guessed this same animal.

"Umm...that thing..." calls out Ian. "That thing that is clean." He bangs his two hands together.

"A turtle?" Mrs. Brown says, trying to clarify what Ian is saying.

"No," Ian says. He doesn't seem able to name the animal he is thinking of.

"A crab?" calls out Amar.

Naresh stops his movements and stands up. "A chameleon!" he says. Many students nod their head in agreement.

"Wow!" praises Mrs. Brown. "Who's next?" Raja volunteers and walks around the carpet flapping her arms in a light motion.

"A butterfly," guesses Inga.

"Yes! My favourite!" smiles Raja. Nichole is the last student to have a turn. She crawls around the carpet on her hands and knees and makes snorting sounds.

"A pig!" calls out many students at once. She smiles and nods her head in agreement. Lots of boisterous laughing and talking at once in response to Nichole's performance. Mrs. Brown asks the students to gather close to her for a story.

"Another book?" Ian asks. Mrs. Brown signals for him to stop talking by placing one finger over her mouth. All the students move closer to Mrs. Brown and she rereads them the book *I Was So Mad* (Mayer, 1983). As she reads many students begin chiming in and saying the words at familiar parts in the story. Ian begins talking to himself in his own language and moving closer to students sitting near him. Mrs. Brown stops the story to address his behaviour and ask him to remain in his spot. She begins to read again only to be disrupted a second time by announcements being made of the P.A. system regarding some of the older grades going on a field trip later that day. Mrs. Brown resumes the story and Ian begins talking to himself again. Finally the story is completely read.

"Let's think about some of the situations that the little boy was in, in this story," suggests Mrs. Brown. "What happened to him in the book? Let's act it out."

No one raises his or her hand to suggest a situation to Mrs. Brown.

“Let’s think about the first situation then,” she prompts. Farhani, Amar, Inga, and Raja all raise their hands to volunteer. Mrs. Brown asks Farhani and Raja. They stand and walk over to the front of the carpet area, where they stand frozen and stare at Mrs. Brown.

“Farhani, start!” whispers Raja. Farhani stares at her blankly.

“Where’s your bathtub,” prompts Mrs. Brown. Raja grabs a chair from a nearby table and hands it to Farhani, who stands behind it. Farhani mimes the first scene in the book, where the little boy was caught putting frogs in the family’s bathtub.

Raja walks across to him and says in a firm voice, “Don’t! Stop!”

Farhani looks over at Mrs. Brown and asks, “Can I say I was so mad like in the story?” Mrs. Brown nods her head yes. “I was so mad!” says Farhani. The students spontaneously clap as Farhani and Raja freeze, marking the end of the scene.

“Wonderful!” praises Mrs. Brown. “Who is going to go next and what scene are you going to act out?” All the students with the exception of Matthew and Nichole have their hands up, indicating their interest in participating. Ian, Inga and Madalynn are chosen by Mrs. Brown to go next. They stand in front of their peers next to the chair that was used as a tub in the previous scene. Inga and Madalynn are whispering and giggling to each other. Ian, acting as the little boy in the book, sticks his head under the chair, pretending it is a dollhouse. Madalynn and Inga both yell at him “No you can’t use the dollhouse!” and he pulls his head out, frowning at them. They stop and look at the students sitting on the carpet.

“Nice actors, nice actors!” calls out Dana.

“Are you finished?” asks Mrs. Brown. “Who is going to go next?” Naresh and Dana volunteer. They stand at the front of the room and immediately Naresh uses the chair left over from the other scene as though it was a clothesline with clothes hanging on it. He pops his head up against it, rubbing it around.

“You can’t play in there! You can’t play in those sheets!” calls out Dana to Naresh.

Naresh straightens up, clenches his fists in the air, frowns and yells “I was so mad!” The other students laugh.

“Nice actors, nice actors,” says Dana as she and Naresh walk back to their places on the carpet.

“You are acting out the scenes in the order they are happening in the book,” observes Mrs. Brown. “Who is next?”

“I want to be the grandpa,” calls out Farhani. Amar stands up and uses the chair, pretending that it is a house. He mimes painting it, as he moves his arm up and down in large stroking motions. Farhani walks over to him and studies him for a moment. Amar continues to pretend that he is painting the house.

“Hey! You can’t do that!” Farhani says to him. “You can’t paint the house!”

Amar stops what he is doing and looks at Farhani. He suddenly makes a very loud growling noise as he bares his teeth. The students go crazy with laughter.

“You have done a great job acting out the events that happened in the story to the little boy,” summarizes Mrs. Brown. “You have even acted them out in the order they happened in the story. How did the boy react to all of his problems in the book?”

“The boy no good,” responds Ian.

Raja raises her hand and Mrs. Brown calls on her. "He decided to run away."

"How else could he have solved his problems?" questions Mrs. Brown. "What else could he have done?"

"He could have just told him mom please be nice to me," suggests Inga.

"If he wanted to run away he could just make something for himself like a house for his own house and pretend it's just for him and no one else and not run away," shares Naresh.

"Those are two good ideas," compliments Mrs. Brown.

"Let's do both of them!" suggests Raja and Naresh nods his head in agreement.

Naresh volunteers to act as the little boy and Inga acts as the grandma. They pose in front of their peers.

"I forget my lines," says Inga to Mrs. Brown. Naresh steps over to her in role and attempts to prompt her by speaking.

"Can I build a fort for myself?" he asks.

"Yes you can!" she replies. Naresh uses the chair that remains in the acting area and mimes building.

Raja puts up her hand and Mrs. Brown calls on her. "He could have...um...asked his mom that if...I mean...if the mom could have taken him to the park if she wasn't working," she says.

"Great idea!" Mrs. Brown replies. "Who can act this out?"

"I want to be the mom," says Raja. Dana volunteers to be the little boy. They stand at the front of the carpet and face each other.

"Can I go to the park? Can you take me to the park?" asks Dana.

“Okay, I’d love to go with you!” replies Raja. The two smile at each other.

“Good actors, good actors,” Dana compliments herself as she and Raja walk back to their spot on the carpet.

“Any other ideas for things the little boy could have done instead of becoming angry in the story?” prompts Mrs. Brown.

“He could have just asked his sister or his grandpa if he could help paint the house or play with the dollhouse instead of doing it by himself,” says Naresh.

“Let’s act it out!” encourages Mrs. Brown. Amar wants to be the boy and Madalynn volunteers to be the grandpa.

“I want to pretend I am like my own poppy [grandfather],” Madalynn says to Mrs. Brown who nods her head in agreement. Madalynn stands at the chair and pretends that she is painting the house. Amar walks up to her from behind.

“Grandpa, can I help you paint the house?” he asks.

“Yes you can!” Madalynn responds as she continues to mime painting.

“Good actors, good actors,” Dana calls out from the audience.

“Can we just do one more?” pleads Inga. “Maybe he could ask his sister if he could play with the dollhouse with her together.” Dana, Raja and Naresh volunteer to act out the scene.

“But it was my idea!” protests Inga.

Naresh pretends to stick his head in the chair, copying Ian’s actions from the earlier scene portraying the little boy and sister arguing over the dollhouse. He says, “It’s too small!” to Raja. She pretends to be very little and crawls over on the floor to him.

“Gaga, gaga, yeah it’s too small,” she replies. Both sit next to the chair and pretend to begin playing with it. Dana walks over to them in role as the mother.

“Nice sharing you two!” she praises.

“Let’s talk about all these great ideas,” says Mrs. Brown.

“It felt fine to play the actor except for when the boy was mad,” shares Farhani.

“I played the mom and it felt good...no...wait...sad when I told the boy to not do something. I had fun getting up in front of the class though,” shares Inga.

“Here, yes!” says Ian as he leaves the carpet and walks over to the class schedule, pointing to a picture depicting activity time. “Yes,” he says.

“It’s activity time soon,” encourages Mrs. Brown.

“I was the sister and the mommy today. I was sad when I was telling...um...I was telling the boy to not do that but when I was saying you can’t play with the dollhouse I was feeling mean,” shares Raja.

“When did you feel better?” asks Mrs. Brown. “Better sharing with others?” Raja shakes her head yes.

“I was having fun being the boy,” says Naresh.

“I got to be the grandpa today! I had fun because I got to be a boy and it felt silly!” exclaims Inga.

“Who else got to be the opposite of who they are?” asks Mrs. Brown.

Madalynn slowly raises her hand. “When I was the grandpa it felt like I was going back and forth on something.”

“What do you mean?” asks Mrs. Brown.

“My stomach felt a little different...a little scary but a little fun,” replies

Madalynn.

“You’ve never been a boy before but it’s fun to try something new,” assures Mrs.

Brown. “Let’s move on to activity centers.

6: Off and Running

Although highly interested in the warm-up activity, students had great difficulty in today's session transforming the purpose of ordinary objects. Student participation in the sociodramas appeared to be the most observed so far, with multiple students suggesting topics for discussion, acting the situations out, and brainstorming alternative responses for the issues being explored. This workshop highlights a noticeable change in students' dramatic ability and engagement within the artistic activities. More risk-taking occurs as more students experiment in role as characters of the opposite gender.

The students are in a jovial mood today, sitting together and chatting loudly before Mrs. Brown begins the workshop. Dana and Ian enter the classroom late, arriving just before the workshop begins. Dana smiles shyly at me as she enters the classroom. Ian comes bounding over, yelling "HELLOOOO!" as he breezes past me. Raja comes over to show me a book she is reading independently. It is equivalent to a grade four level of reading comprehension. Mrs. Brown calls for students to put their books away and gather close to hear about the day's activities. Students form a story bunch and gather tight, the talking stops abruptly.

"What do these look like?" she asks as she displays a basket of ordinary objects from around the classroom (for example paintbrush, cup, doll, pointer, pencil, telephone, marbles). She asks students to form a circle and she dumps the objects in the middle. A few students murmur the names of the objects she has displayed.

"I see the phone from the house center." "There is the flower pointer." "Oh, are we painting today?" random voices call out.

"These are not just any objects," Mrs. Brown taunts. "They can do special things - like this flower pointer. We normally use it to count numbers on the calendar, but watch what I can use it for!" She pretends that the pointer is a shovel and begins to mime digging with it. The students laugh. "Who has another idea for this pointer?" she asks.

Amar volunteers and comes to the front of the room. He takes the pointer from Mrs. Brown and holds it up high. No one is sure what he is using it for. "I'm pretending it's a real flower, and I'm holding it up to the sun," he explains.

Raja goes next. She demonstrates using the flower as a decoration, holding it close to the bulletin board that displays student artwork.

"That is a sunflower!" Ian yells to Raja. She makes a quieting noise while pursing her lips and putting her pointer finger over them. Naresh comes up to the front of the room for a turn.

"You can use this as a bee catcher to catch the bees. You have to wait for them to come to it. You can also pretend that you have a way to put all the flowers in the garden," he explains to the students as he holds the pointer up as if it was growing from the ground.

"Good ideas," Mrs. Brown praises. "Who else has another use for some of these objects." Farhani raises his hand. Mrs. Brown invites him to come and demonstrate. He chooses to use the same flower pointer, but acts as if it was a hockey stick, pretending to make a slap shot with it. The students make "oh" and "aw" sounds in response.

"You can use it to help planting flowers," Madalynn calls out from her place on the carpet. Dana holds her hand up to indicate she wants a turn. She stands up and swings the pointer as if it was a baseball bat. At this point, Mrs. Brown spreads the other objects around and points them out again to the students, inviting them to use any one they wish.

"You can choose any object," Mrs. Brown explains. "You can use it for anything, not just what you normally use it for."

Farhani volunteers to have a second turn and chooses a tube of marbles. "Can I take the marbles out of the container?" he asks Mrs. Brown.

"Sure!" she says. "Whatever you need to do." Farhani empties the marbles and starts arranging them on the flower.

"It's a piece of artwork," he explains. "You can make something with them, build with them."

"Excellent idea!" praises Mrs. Brown. All of the students have their hand up in the air, volunteering to participate.

Amar chooses the empty painting cup. He walks over to the house center and pretends to fill the cup with water from the play sink. He looks coyly at the group of students and then acts as though he is drinking water from the cup. Everyone laughs. "I can use the painting cup as a drinking cup," he explains. He walks back to his spot on the carpet, giggling all the way.

Raja walks over to the phone. "I'm going to use it, for, um, to write down all the numbers from the phone book and I'm going to save them. I'm going to find my number in the phone book too." Ian gets up from his spot on the carpet, runs over to Raja and grabs the phone from her hand. He walks across the room and places the phone in the house center. He grabs the receiver and pretends to use it, making a "dadada" sound as if he was talking. Raja laughs and Mrs. Brown asks Ian to return to his spot.

Naresh participates next. He picks up a medium size funnel and holds the narrow tip to his lips, blowing into it and pretending to play keys on the side. "It's a trumpet," he explains to the others.

“That was great!” says Mrs. Brown. “Yesterday we read the book *I Was So Mad* (Mayer, 1983). Can you remind me of the story and what happened?”

“He asked to do lots of things and was told he couldn’t do them and he got soooo angry like water the garden and play with things,” Raja says excitedly.

“Look here!” Ian shouts and points to the book in Mrs. Brown’s hands. “He is don’t play,” he says and laughs.

“Close your eyes and think back...okay...close your eyes,” prompts Mrs. Brown. “Think back to when you were angry or upset or disappointed. Maybe someone said something to you or you couldn’t do something. Can someone share about when they got really angry? Okay, open your eyes.”

Farhani puts his hand up and Mrs. Brown calls his name. He pauses and says, “I forget.”

“Someone took my toy,” Naresh shares.

“And you got really angry?” asks Mrs. Brown.

“Yes,” responds Naresh. Mrs. Brown writes his idea down on a piece of chart paper.

Raja raises her hand. “Once...ummm...ah...when I was accidentally not watching some stuff it fell out of my hand and hurt my sister and my mom yelled at me because I accidentally hurt my sister and I got so mad!” Mrs. Brown writes her idea down beneath Naresh’s idea.

“This is actually happening right now!” blurts Amar. “I needed batteries for my hot wheel thing. It’s automatic, but I’ve never actually tried it, so my mom said she would get the batteries, but she didn’t actually get them in a few days. My sister had

batteries. I needed long batteries in a circle, then there were broken batteries. My sister was going to bring some to school today so it could get fixed. There are these circle batteries and also small ones, and I need two of them. My sister wouldn't bring them today to fix it, so someone needs to fix it at school. I don't know if it's fixed now. I was angry because I couldn't actually try it to see if it's fixed. I didn't want to wait." Mrs. Brown scribes his ideas furiously on the chart paper. Amar sighs at the end of his story.

"Any other ideas?" invites Mrs. Brown.

"Someone once took my sweater," Dana whispers. Mrs. Brown adds this idea to the list.

Farhani raises his hand and says, "Last time when me and my brother were fighting – we were just fighting."

"About what?" questions Mrs. Brown.

"We were fighting for a toy. We both wanted to use the toy." Mrs. Brown writes this idea on the paper. Students silently watch her write Farhani's idea down.

"We're going to act out these situations and I need some volunteers," explains Mrs. Brown. "When we act them out, I need to people who are watching to think of different ways to solve the problem so that we don't end up mad at the end."

"We've done that before," says Raja.

"Let's try it again," encourages Mrs. Brown.

Naresh and Farhani volunteer to start the first scene. "Let's start with the toy situation," Farhani suggests. Both boys walk to the front of the classroom. Naresh takes a few toys to use as props off the shelf. He begins to play with the toy as Farhani stands next to him, watching. Farhani does not move.

“Farhani, you need to start taking the toys,” Mrs. Brown encourages. Farhani follows the direction and walks over to where Naresh is. He starts taking the toys away and holding them in his arms.

Naresh growls, “Hey! Give me that toy back!”

“NO!” Farhani yells and backs away from him, holding the toys protectively in his arms.

“What would you normally say to him?” Mrs. Brown asks Naresh.

“Let’s fight for it!” he taunts Farhani. Mrs. Brown calls for the scene to stop.

“What can they do differently to solve this problem?” Mrs. Brown asks the spectators.

Dana puts up her hand. Mrs. Brown asks her which role she wants to enter into. She chooses Farhani’s role.

“What are you going to do to make this situation different?” she asks. “What are you going to say?” Raja walks over to Dana and whispers in her ear.

“I’m going to give this toy back to you,” she says to Naresh and hands him the toy. “Can I play with you instead?” she asks. “Can we share the toy?”

“Yes,” Naresh answers and the students in the audience begin to laugh as Naresh and Dana pretend to eat the toy food that Naresh was originally playing with. The students return to the carpet and sit down.

“What scene should we explore next?” Mrs. Brown asks. Madalynn raises her hand and suggests that the next scene should be Raja’s scene, where she accidentally hurt her sister.

“That’s mine!” Raja exclaims. “I want to be my big sister!” Raja volunteers to act in the scene. Madalynn chooses to be the mom and Dana volunteers to accidentally drop the toy on her sister. All three girls stand in front of the class. Raja sits on the floor and hums to herself, pretending to be drawing a picture.

“Action!” yells Farhani from the audience. Dana takes a toy off the toy shelf and walks over next to Raja. She doesn’t say anything but pretends to drop a toy on Raja.

“OH!” Raja yells. “That hurt!” Madalynn comes running over to the two girls, stops, and looks at Mrs. Brown.

“I don’t know what to say,” she says. She points her finger at Dana.

“I feel sad,” Dana says to Madalynn.

“Remember, in the original scene the character felt mad because mom scolded her,” Mrs. Brown reminds them. Madalynn and Dana look at Mrs. Brown.

“I don’t want to yell though,” Madalynn says. “I don’t like to yell.” Farhani raises his hand and as to enter the scene in Madalynn’s place as the mom.

“How could you hurt your sister!” he says as the mom, addressing Dana. “That’s bad!” Ian parrots the words “that’s bad” from the audience.

“I didn’t mean to do it!” Dana replies.

“Go to your room anyway,” Farhani says, still in role as the mom. Dana walks away, stomping her feet. The students in the audience roll with laughter.

“How can we resolve this?” Mrs. Brown asks. Farhani now volunteers to be Raja in the scene, the girl who dropped the toy on her sister and Raja wants to be the mom. Dana is the sister. “Instead of getting angry at the end and stomping to your room, what can you do?” Mrs. Brown encourages the actors.

“Say sorry?” offers Farhani. The scene starts again. Farhani walks over to Dana and drops the toy on her. Raja marches immediately over.

“Go to your room!” she commands in a loud voice.

“But I’m sorry!” pleads Farhani.

“Go to your room anyway!” Raja responds.

“What happens next?” prompts Mrs. Brown.

Farhani pretends to walk to his room. “That’s okay,” he says to Raja. “I can play and snooze and relax in my room.” Lots of laughter is heard in the audience and many students now have their hand up, volunteering to participate in the next scene. Amar volunteers to act in his suggested scene.

“I want to be me,” he says.

“I want to be the dad,” requests Ian.

“There is no dad,” says Amar to Ian.

“Wait!” responds Ian.

“Actually, there can be a dad,” Amar thinks aloud. Ian and Amar stand up in front of the other students. “Actually, first I have to ask for the batteries and mom says yes and then she doesn’t get them even though she said yes. I need fat circle batteries,” he says to Ian.

“Wait,” says Ian in role as the mom.

“Mom, I need two fat, circle batteries,” asks Amar.

“Wait,” repeats Ian.

“Can I have two fat circle batteries?” pleads Amar.

“Wait!” yells Ian.

“Who can help this situation?” Mrs. Brown asks the spectators.

“Why doesn’t he just tell his mom or dad that they must have forgotten the batteries?” suggests Hassan. Hassan volunteers to replace Amar in the scene.

“Can I please have fat, long batteries?” he asks Ian.

“Can you wait?” answers Ian.

Hassan asks again. “Can I please have fat, long batteries?”

“Wait,” says Ian.

“Mom, you forgot the batteries!” explains Hassan.

“Wait,” repeats Ian.

“What can mom do differently in this situation?” asks Mrs. Brown.

Naresh puts his hand up. “Actually, can I be the dad still?” he asks Mrs. Brown, who nods her head. He replaces Ian in the scene.

Hassan asks again, “Can I please have black, long batteries?”

“Sure, we can just go out and buy them,” Naresh answers Hassan’s exasperated requests for the batteries.

“What would you say to the mom if she forgot?” Mrs. Brown asks Hassan. Raja volunteers to step into the role of mom, replacing Naresh.

“I won’t get the batteries,” she says to Hassan.

“Can I please have fat, long batteries?” Hassan pleads with Raja.

“I don’t have them!” Raja responds.

“Please can I have fat, long batteries?” Hassan is desperate.

“Okay, let’s go buy them...I forgot about them.” Raja answers. The students chat with excitement on the carpet as the actors sit down.

“How did it make you feel to get up and act?” Mrs. Brown questions the students.

“I felt angry!” Amar answers.

“Why?” Mrs. Brown asks.

“Because I had to wait and remembering it made me angry. My sister said she is going to bring them,” he says, referring to the batteries.

Madalynn raises her hand. “About the toy,” she says, “they could have just asked right away if they could play with the toy.”

“It was fun to be the girl,” shares Farhani. “Cause I was someone else very different from me.”

“I played a boy,” responds Madalynn to Naresh. “But I wasn’t today or yesterday.”

“How did it feel?” asks Mrs. Brown.

“I was a little nervous because I was scared that people might laugh at me,” answers Madalynn. “But I was proud because I was nervous at first but then it felt good.”

“That’s good,” commends Mrs. Brown. “It’s okay to take a chance and be something different than you normally are.” The students end their discussion and proceed to their activity centers.

7: *Transforming the Issues into Images*

Although many students were eager to participate in the warm-up, many had difficulty comprehending the activity or working with their partner. A new book outlining multiple social issues (for example losing something of importance, being lonely, not understanding the world around) is introduced to students. When asked to connect the issues explored through the book into an image activity, many students had difficulty expressing their abstract thoughts shared in discussion into a drawing. Students were not able to transform their verbalization into a visual, artistic representation. Some of the issues students had with their partners in the warm-up transferred into the image activity.

The students are sitting on the carpet waiting for Mrs. Brown. Matthew is throwing his name card around while making faces at the other students sitting near him. Mrs. Brown asks students to put their name cards away.

“We are going to work with a friend today.” She stops talking and waits for Matthew to look at her. He is busy playing picking at his nails. “You are going to work as a pair with a friend.” Mrs. Brown assigns students into pairs. “Go to an area so you and your partner have room. This is what we’re going to do. Matthew, you need to sit down with your partner. We’re going to play a game. A game where you have to try and remember something. You have to try and think and remember. We’re going to stand up with our partner and we’re going to take turns. One person is going to do something different to him or herself. Then you look back at your partner and see if you can figure out what has changed.

Ian and Dana are partners and appear uncertain of what to do. They spend a few minutes sitting silently on the carpet, looking around at what the other pairs are doing. Finally they seem to realize that they need to change something about their appearance. Dana moves her bracelet from her left wrist to the right one. Ian does not realize at first that it is the bracelet that has changed. When it’s Ian’s turn to change something about his appearance, he is unable to do so. He does not seem to understand what he needs to do.

He sits and smiles at Dana. Mrs. Brown notices his difficulty and attempts to help him by prompting him to roll up his sleeves. Dana is unable to guess what has changed about Ian, even with Mrs. Brown's help. Matthew is sitting with his partner next to Dana, and he whispers to her what has changed about Ian.

Naresh and Farhani comprehend the activity immediately and get right to work. They are both giggling and smiling at each other, immersed in the activity. Farhani untucks his shirt from his pants and Naresh guesses right away. Farhani has a harder time guessing what Naresh has changed. When he can't guess, Naresh giggles and moves his hand away from his shirt. He was hiding an unzipped zipper from Farhani.

Matthew and Inga have great difficulty working as a team. It takes them a few minutes to begin the activity even though they both appear to understand the directions. Matthew is busy watching the pairs around him and guessing what they have changed instead of focusing on his own partner work. When he finally does change something about his appearance, Inga is unable to guess because what Matthew has changed is how his toe is positioned inside his shoe.

"I can't see that from here!" complains Inga and Matthew just shrugs. Inga appears upset and the pair just sit silently until the end of the activity.

Raja and Madalynn work well together as partners, each taking turns guessing what has changed and supporting each other. Raja changes her appearance first, rolling up one of her pant cuffs. She immediately smiles and gestures to her pants so Mrs. Brown can see what she has changed. Madalynn has a very difficult time figuring out Raja's change, and Raja provides some clues to help her (for example look near my feet, look down, you are looking close). Raja is so excited about what she has changed that she

finally blurts the answer out before Madalynn can guess correctly. Raja immediately guesses that Madalynn is sitting up on her knees.

Amar and Hassan are excited, evident in their giggling and whispering about the activity, but they become silly and lose focus. It is unclear as to whether they understand the activity. After looking around and seeing other students engaging in the activity, the two boys seem to figure out what they need to do. At first Amar has a hard time discovering what Hassan has changed about his appearance. In fits of laughter he realizes that Hassan has removed one of his socks and put the shoe back on. Both boys are in hysterics. Capitalizing on the silly moment, Hassan immediately realizes that Amar has removed a shoe and hidden it behind him. Mrs. Brown comes over to see what the boys are doing that is so funny and ends up going them in their uncontrollable laughter.

At the conclusion of the warm-up activity, Mrs. Brown invites students to join her on the carpet for a story. She reads the book *Corduroy* (Freeman, 1968) to them and students appear to immediately like the main character, a teddy bear named Corduroy. They listen raptly as Mrs. Brown describes Corduroy's antics in the department store on his search for his overall's missing button. As Mrs. Brown reads the story, music streams into the classroom from the adjoining Junior Kindergarten classroom. Farhani's head begins to bob to the music as his eyes remain locked on the storybook.

"Put up your hand and tell me about this story," Mrs. Brown directs.

"He was on a toy shelf," Inga begins.

"Lisa came to the store and her mommy said she could not buy them." Madalynn adds.

"Because he lost his button," says Matthew.

“And he tried to escape to find his button,” responds Farhani.

Raja raises her hand and says, “He tried to pull a button off the bed to fix his overalls.”

Mrs. Brown continues the story. “The watchman found Corduroy and said ‘you don’t belong here.’ He put Corduroy back on the shelf.”

“Then Lisa came and took Corduroy home,” smiles Inga.

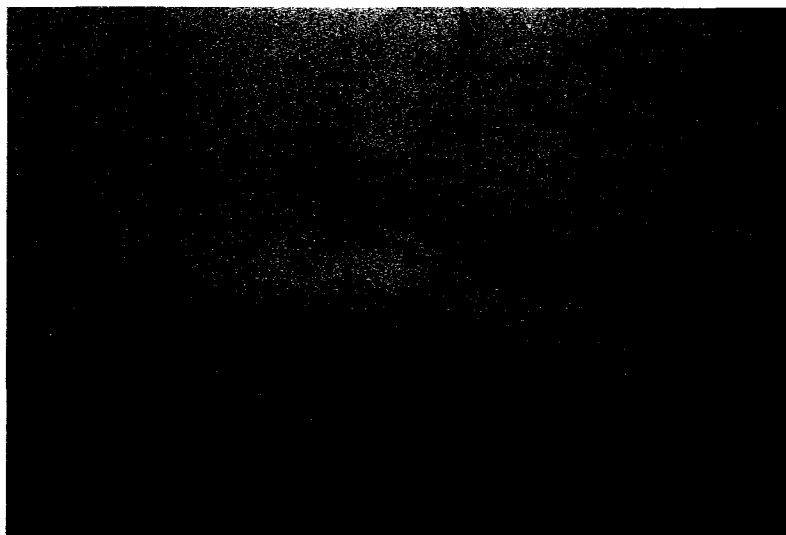
“What did Lisa do for him?” asks Mrs. Brown.

“Sew a button on his overalls for him,” blurts Madalynn.

“She told him that she liked him the way he was, but he would be more comfortable with a button. What I need you to do now is think about how you have felt when you have lost something very special to you. Close your eyes and think about that special thing that went missing. Good! Open your eyes. You are going to work with the same partner you had for our warm-up. Your job is to draw a picture together of how you feel when you have lost something.” Mrs. Brown begins to distribute paper and crayons to the pairs, who scatter around the room to work. Some students understand the image activity Farhani and Naresh who discuss a lost puzzle piece they once used in the classroom. The other pairs do not have such an easy time discussing an idea and drawing it. Hassan and Amar discuss the possibility of drawing a ‘triple-headed ghost’, Inga and Matthew get into an argument over sharing the piece of paper and then decide to do individual drawings on the paper that are divided by a large, thick line draw half-way across, Raja and Madalynn spend most of their time discussing everything but the topic at hand, and Dana and Ian are unsure of what to do and require much teacher prompting and

encouragement. Surprisingly, by the end of the discussion and drawing period, most of the students have drawn a picture of their experience losing something important to them.

Figure 4: “I lost my lego” by Hassan



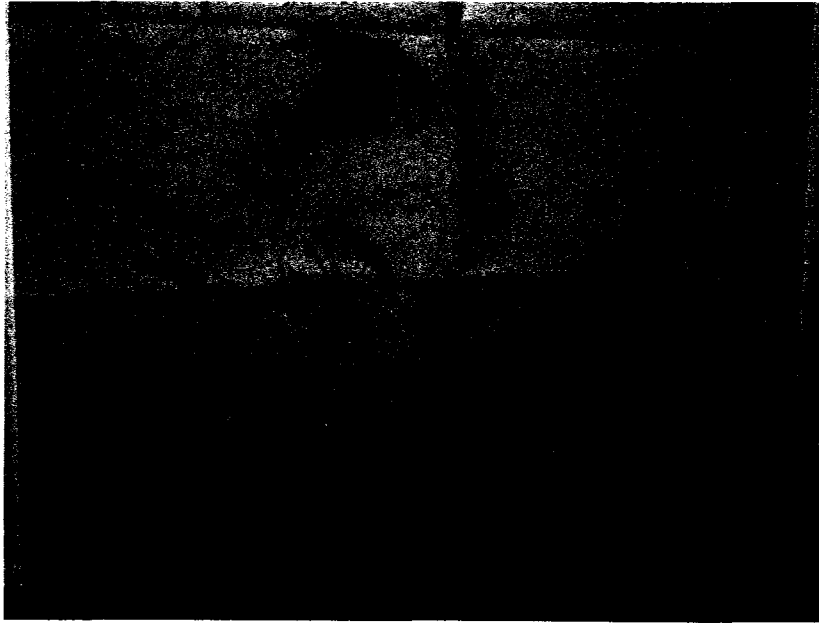
“I lost my lego. It made me feel angry.” (Hassan)
There are three people in the picture, not just Hassan.

Figure 5: “My airplane went through the fence” by Matthew



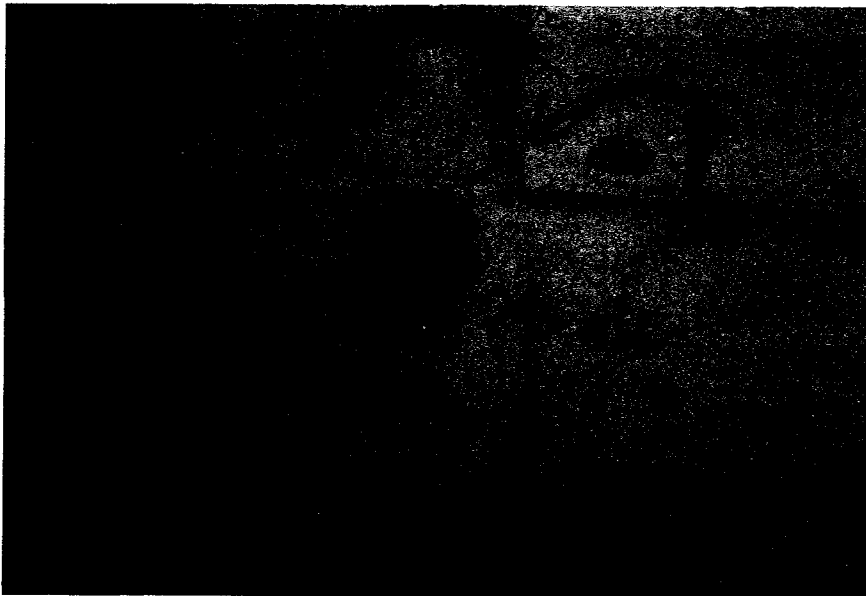
“I lost my airplane that I shot through the fence. The bars were broken on the fence.”
Matthew spent a great deal of time working on this picture after a disagreement with his partner, Inga, on what the original drawing should be about.

Figure 6: “We lost the whole puzzle” by Farhani and Naresh



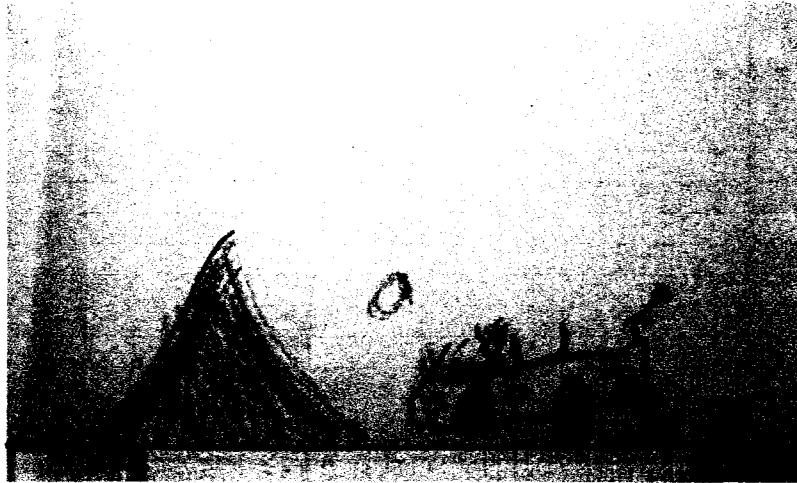
“We were making a puzzle. We lost the whole puzzle. It turned into a rainbow.”
(Farhani and Naresh)

Figure 7: “I lost my three dogs” by Madalynn



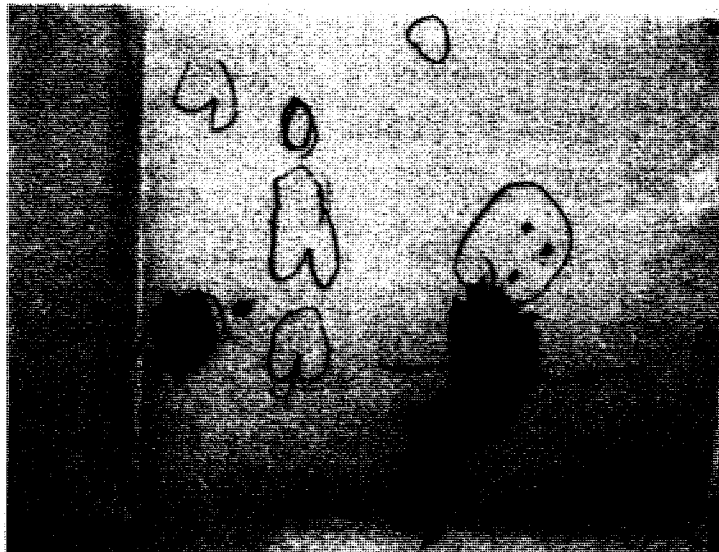
“I lost my three dogs. My sister asked, ‘Do you want to come outside and play for a bit?’
When I came back they were gone. Someone took them.” (Madalynn)

Figure 8: “Snow, mountains, car, sun and sky” by Ian



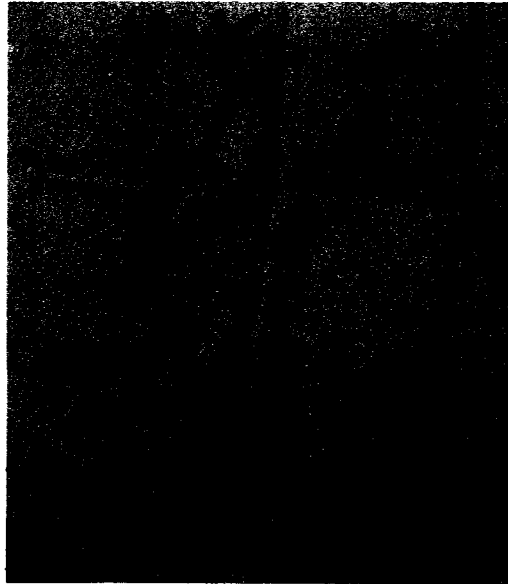
“This is the snow, the mountains, the car, and the sun, and the sky.” (Ian)
Ian needed repeated instructions and teacher support and encouragement to draw this picture. He refused to draw anything on the paper when the activity first started, but changed his mind when he observed the other students in the class drawing pictures as well. The picture has nothing to do with losing an object of importance.

Figure 9: “I lost my toys” by Dana



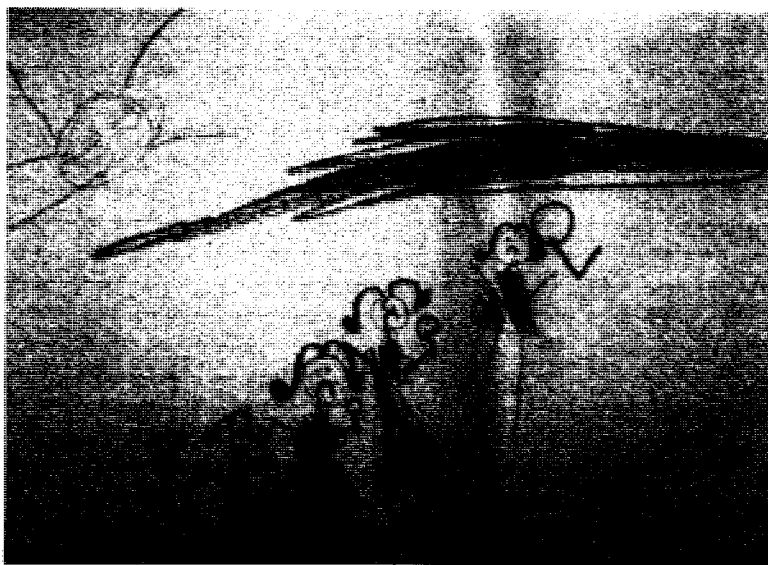
“I lost my toys.” (Dana)

Figure 10: “I lost my dolls” by Raja



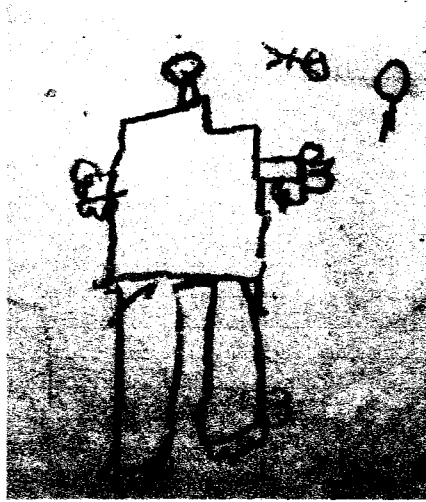
“I lost my dolls when I was playing.” (Raja)

Figure 11: “Looking for my legos” by Inga



“All of my friends are looking for my legos. They all have magnifying glasses. My friend’s cat is looking too!” (Inga)

Figure 12: “My missing Ldo game” by Amar



“I lost my red piece on my Ldo game. I was actually sad.” (Amar)

8: Time Constraints Affect the Workshop

Student ability and interest in the dramatic activities appears to be increasing with each successive workshop. Students are extremely interested in the warm-up and main activity in today's workshop, however the dramatic action is ended early when an interruption required students to leave the classroom earlier than they anticipated.

Mrs. Brown begins a countdown from the number ten to get students' attention as they mill about the room upon entry. When she gets to zero, all students are sitting on the carpet in front of her and ready to begin. "We are going to make two lines today and do an activity that is very similar to what we did yesterday," she explains. "We need to get into two lines." Mrs. Brown has each student stand up, one at a time, and helps place them into two equal lines of four students each (three are absent today). "Just like yesterday," Mrs. Brown continues, "we are going to work with a partner and change something about the way we look. We aren't going to let our partners see what we are changing. When we get back together, you each have to guess what is different." Some of the students appear confused. "Remember yesterday? Remember how we made something different about ourselves? How can we do that today if we are standing in two lines?"

"We can close our eyes and both change something," Amar suggests.

"Or the person changing can turn around," interjects Naresh.

"We can do it at the same time," says Raja. The students in each line turn so that they are facing away from their partner. All the students change something about their appearance. Madalynn seems a little confused and Raja orders her to turn around so she can't see what Raja is changing.

"Okay," says Mrs. Brown. "When I count to three you turn around and see if you can figure out what your partner changed." The students turn around and lots of laughing

is heard. Some of the students immediately guess what has changed, while others have greater difficulty. Amar is laughing hysterically and holding both hands to his shirt to hide that he has undone some of the buttons. Hassan cannot guess what Amar has changed and both boys are laughing at the other.

“Did you change your pants?” Hassan asks.

“No!” squeals Amar.

“Did you take off your shoe and put it back on?”

“NOPE!”

“Did you pull your pants up higher?”

“NOOOO!”

“What did you do?”

Amar finally lets Hassan in on the secret that he is hiding his change with his hands. Mrs. Brown calls for students to switch partners. As students continue with the game, it is observed that they are now changing more than one thing about their appearance. Some students, like Farhani, are changing three and four things. Others are being sneaky and changing things that their partner could not see in the first place, like their socks within their shoe, or the necklace clasp at the back of their neck. It is interesting to observe their advanced manipulations of the game.

Hassan again is involved in another complicated change, but this time it is he who has changed something that no one else can guess.

“Did you undo the Velcro on your shoe?” asks Amar.

“Did your shoes change at all?” wonders Madalynn.

“What did you do?” questions Farhani.

“I pulled the side zipper down on my shoe!” Hassan answers.

Ian is also appearing to grasp the concept of this activity, changing three things about his appearance (one arm is out of his sleeve, one shoe is covered with the other, and the sticker that was on his shirt is now on his forehead). Students gather around him and marvel at all the changes.

“Okay,” calls Mrs. Brown. “Let’s move on to our next activity.” The students groan loudly in disappointment. “Let’s form a story bunch!” The students sit closely to her on the carpet. She shows them a stuffed teddy bear that is wearing green overalls. He is missing one of his buttons. “Mrs. McLennan brought Corduroy to school,” she explains. “We read his story yesterday. We can’t reread it today because we have our class pictures soon. Can someone help me remember the story?”

“He was on a toy shelf,” begins Inga,

“Here is toy!” Ian calls out, pointing to the stuffed bear Mrs. Brown is holding.

“The girl came along,” continues Madalynn.

“What was her name?” asks Mrs. Brown.

“Lisa,” says Raja, “who told her mom can I buy Corduroy but her mom said no because it doesn’t look like new because a button’s missing.”

“Why was Corduroy sad?” asks Mrs. Brown.

“Because he lost a button and Lisa was leaving,” answers Hassan.

“Lisa couldn’t buy him,” continues Mrs. Brown.

“He’s looking for his button,” says Farhani.

“He found a mountain!” calls out Hassan.

“Was it an elevator?” asks Madalynn.

“An escalator,” corrects Naresh.

“You’re right, he thought he was climbing a mountain. Where did he think he was?” asks Mrs. Brown.

“I like it!” shouts Ian.

“He thought he was in a palace,” corrects Farhani.

“But it was just a room,” adds Naresh.

“Right, he was in a department store with all the beds and furniture but it wasn’t a palace,” says Mrs. Brown.

“He found a button and was trying to pull it off,” adds Amar.

“He needed a button and wanted one back,” states Naresh.

“Something happened!” prompts Mrs. Brown.

“The police!” squeals Inga.

“The officer?” hesitates Naresh.

“I’ll give you a hint,” says Mrs. Brown as she points to her watch.

“A clock?” guesses Raja.

“If I wear it on my wrist?” continues Mrs. Brown.

“A watch?” guesses Hassan.

“A watchman!” yells Farhani.

“Lisa came the next day,” Madalynn continues the story.

“Lisa is going to buy him...” says Farhani.

“With money from her piggy bank!” continues Raja.

“And she gave him a button to hold up his overalls,” ends Madalynn.

“Corduroy said I’ve always wanted a friend,” finished Mrs. Brown. “But poor Corduroy,” says Mrs. Brown as she holds up the stuffed bear for the students to see. “He had many problems in the story. He lost a button, he couldn’t get the button off the mattress, he was found wandering by the watchman, Lisa couldn’t buy him. What could Corduroy done differently? How could he have solved some of his problems?”

“He could have tied his button on very carefully,” suggests Naresh.

“He could have just waited on the toy shelf until someone bought him and put a button on him,” answers Inga.

“What else could he have done,” encourages Mrs. Brown.

“Some people who work in the store could have just fixed Corduroy’s button and she could have just noticed on their own,” states Raja in a matter-of-fact manner.

“Bear, Corduroy, one button,” Ian says as he points to the stuffed bear, “and no button.”

“Maybe someone came along and said I’ll take this bear and bring him back after I sew him,” brainstorms Inga.

“When they were making Corduroy they should have made the button tighter,” suggests Amar. “He could just make sure that the button doesn’t get lost. Be very careful with it.”

“When that one was tighter he could have seen that the other one was looser and he could have asked for it to be tighter or been more careful with it,” adds Raja. At this point a knocking at the classroom door disrupts the conversation regarding Corduroy. Two older students arrive to tell the Senior Kindergarten class that it is their turn to go to the gymnasium for a class picture. The workshop has not been completed yet as the next

step would have been for students to act out their suggestions for how Corduroy could have solved or prevented some of his problems. However, due to the unexpected photo shoot, the workshop ends at this point.

9: Extending the Sociodramas with Actions and Dialogue

Students demonstrate an evolved understanding of the sociodrama activities in this workshop, becoming very involved in their movements and dialogue as characters in the resolution scenes. Students within the sociodramas help prompt and encourage their fellow actors to help the drama evolve. With Mrs. Brown's directing, students engage actively in the warm-up activity, transforming it into a version of a game from workshop five.

Before beginning the workshop, Mrs. Brown welcomed the class and commended them on their efforts in the class to not interrupt others when they are speaking.

“You’ve been doing a great job,” Mrs. Brown says, “of not interrupting a person that is speaking to another person and instead waiting your turn to speak. I like how some of you have been using our technique of touching my hand to let me know you need to speak to me when I’m talking to someone else. Keep it up!” The class begins to proceed with their calendar activities before delving into the sociodrama. Matthew needs to be addressed repeatedly by Mrs. Brown throughout this time for multiple behaviours including putting his shirt’s hood over his head, shuffling in his seat, disturbing the students sitting around him, making faces at others, and not following routines. As Mrs. Brown is redirecting Matthew, I notice Raja and Naresh both smiling and waving hi to me from the carpet. Matthew begins to pick up stones and lint off the carpet and play with these items. Mrs. Brown asks him to place them in the garbage. As he walks across the room Mrs. Brown begins to address the students.

“Mrs. McLennan is here again today. We are going to begin by playing a game today where one friend makes sounds or actions and all the other friends on the carpet need to imitate them. What does imitate mean?”

Inga puts up her hand. “Copy,” she answers.

“Right!” responds Mrs. Brown. “I need everyone to stand up in a circle. I’m going to pick a friend to start by randomly picking a name card out of our sign in basket.” Mrs. Brown reaches into the basket and pulls out a name card. “Matthew!” she calls out. “Go into the circle and choose a sound and action to do. We’ll follow you. Show us!”

Matthew proceeds to the center of the circle and stands there, staring at Mrs. Brown.

“Tell us what you are going to do,” Mrs. Brown explains.

“You need to wiggle your toes,” he says. “Like this!” and he points to his toes, which are hidden in his shoe. The rest of the students attempt to copy his movements, most are wearing closed shoes so it is hard to see their movements.

Namashi volunteers to go next. “Can we do animals too?” he asks?

“You can do anything you want,” responds Mrs. Brown. Naresh begins to jump around the carpet, using small leaps. He makes a low growl with each jump. The students laugh and copy his movements and sounds. Everyone appears to be participating.

Amar has a turn next. He stomps his feet and wiggles his hands at his side.

“What are you?” asks Mrs. Brown. “What are you doing?”

“I’m a crab!” he exclaims.

“Does a crab make any noise?” prompts Mrs. Brown. The students spontaneously start making little clicking sounds with their tongues. Lots of laughter follows. Farhani has a turn next and pretends to jump and make a “ribbit” sound. Everyone copies him and the carpet is turned into a miniature pond with eleven hopping frogs. Some students get overexcited and begin to scream as they jump and hop into each other.

“You need to do what Farhani did,” prompts Mrs. Brown. “Did he yell and crash into people?”

Dana has a turn next. She crawls on her hands and knees, panting and barking. The students copy her. The students appear to be turning this warm-up activity into the animal guessing game from workshop five. Nichole goes next and acts as a cat, crawling around, sniffing the floor and meowing. All students are now crawling around on the carpet, meowing. Raja volunteers to go next.

“I want to do a type of frog but I don’t know what it is,” she explains to Mrs. Brown. She start wriggling on the ground like a worm. “I don’t know what it’s called.”

“A tadpole?” guesses Mrs. Brown.

“Yeah, like in the book I was looking at this morning,” Raja answers.

“Wow! Like the story you were reading before circle,” Mrs. Brown stops the dramatic action and the students stop moving and look at her. “Let’s look at the book.” Mrs. Brown finds Raja’s book from the book basket and shows the cover to the students. “Raja was reading from this book this morning and she noticed tadpoles were in the book. Let’s look at the pictures.” Mrs. Brown thumbs through the book until she finds the tadpole picture that Raja was referring to. She shows it to the class. “Thanks Raja!” Mrs. Brown asks the students to gather close for a story bunch. She shows the students *Corduroy* (Freeman, 1968). “We need to refresh our memory. We need to go back and try and remember what Corduroy was doing when we talked about him last Friday. Let’s go back over the story because today we need to think about different endings for our story. Tell me about the story.”

Inga starts off the retelling of the story. “Corduroy was on the shelf.”

“There was so much people and nobody bought Corduroy. Lisa came along and wanted to buy him but her mom said no because her mom said that he had a button missing and didn’t look new,” adds Raja.

“He didn’t know he had a button off,” chimes in Matthew. Mrs. Brown flips through the book and shows students the pictures in the story that correspond to their retelling.

“He went looking for his button,” says Farhani.

“On the escalator,” adds Inga.

“That he thought was a mountain,” shouts Amar.

“And he thought the store was a palace,” Inga tries to out tell the others.

“He found something on the mattress that he wanted to use,” Mrs. Brown encourages.

“A button!” yells Madalynn. Ian has moved closer and closer to Mrs. Brown’s chair as the students are retelling the story. He is practically on her lap with his arms. She asks him to back up.

“The watchman found Corduroy,” says Farhani.

“And he brought him back to the shelf where all the toys are,” adds Raja.

Dana puts up her hand and Mrs. Brown calls on her. “Lisa came back to buy him,” she says. “She gave him another button.”

“Because she thought it would be easier for Corduroy,” adds Matthew.

“Guess what our job is today,” quizzes Mrs. Brown. “You need to become an author.”

“A person who writes books?” questions Naresh. “Me and Raja are writing a book together about spaceships.”

“Today you need to be an author, but you don’t have to write the whole story for me. I want you to rewrite the ending to our *Corduroy* (Freeman, 1968) story. Then you’re going to turn from authors to actors and act out your new stories. Let’s think of new endings for the story. Our job right now is to write another ending for this story. Lisa brought Corduroy home. What else could have happened?”

Madalynn is the only student to raise her hand. “He could ask Lisa to sew a button on for him,” she tentatively says.

“Great!” encourages Mrs. Brown. “Let’s act out Madalynn’s idea. How many friends do we need for this scene?” Madalynn and Dana immediately put up their hands to volunteer for acting.

“Who do you want to be?” asks Mrs. Brown.

“Lisa!” shouts Madalynn.

“We could use Corduroy,” Raja says as she points to the stuffed teddy bear on Mrs. Brown’s lap. “We can use the shelf,” she explains as she points to the toy shelf in the classroom on the other side of the carpet.

“Who can help Corduroy talk and move, since he’s a puppet,” Mrs. Brown asks. Lots of students put their hands in the air.

“We need a button,” Raja says as she takes Corduroy from Mrs. Brown’s hands.

“Let’s pretend,” answers Mrs. Brown.

“Remember, after this one we need to put on a different ending,” further explains Raja.

“Okay!” encourages Mrs. Brown.

Raja, Inga and Madalynn stand at the front of the carpet and look at their teacher. She does not instruct them and instead appears to wait to see what the girls are going to do.

Raja whispers to Madalynn, "Say let's start." No one does anything. Raja walks over to the stuffed Corduroy teddy bear and grabs him. She walks back over to Madalynn and asks, "Can you sew a button on him for me?" She hands Madalynn the bear.

"Yes," Madalynn responds as she grabs the bear from Raja and pretends to begin sewing a button on his overalls. The girls stop and look at their teacher.

"Corduroy could ask Lisa to sew a button on and Lisa maybe could say she didn't know how, so she could ask her mom to help her sew a button on for Corduroy, her mom could say yes," Inga tries to expand upon the scene just acted out.

"Wow! Great idea!" encourages Mrs. Brown. "I like how you've just expanded on the last idea and scene. Who wants to be a part of this scene?" Madalynn and Raja sit down as Naresh, Inga and Dana take their places. "Okay, Inga told you the plan, how are you going to start this scene? Corduroy?" Mrs. Brown prompts the actors.

Naresh, in role as Corduroy, walks over to Dana who is Lisa and asks, "Can you sew a button on me?"

"Yes," hesitates Dana, "But I don't know how."

Inga whispers in role as the mom, "Ask me as your mom to help you." Dana does not move.

"Try again," encourages Mrs. Brown.

"Can you sew a button on me?" asks Naresh.

"No," relies Dana.

“Tell him why,” calls out Mrs. Brown.

“Yes,” says Dana, visibly confused.

“You just said no a minute ago,” says Naresh, trying to prompt Dana.

“I don’t know how,” whispers Inga to Dana, who repeats the line.

“Ask your mom to help you,” Naresh suggests to Dana.

Dana walks over to Inga. “Mom,” she says, “Can you help me sew?”

“Yes Lisa!” says Inga as she takes the stuffed Corduroy and pretends to sew a button on his overalls. She hands Corduroy back to Dana. The students sitting on the carpet clap.

“What a great job!” Mrs. Brown praises. “I love how you are saying lots of lines and doing lots of actions. Any other ideas?”

Raja raises her hand. “When Lisa walks out of the store, she asks one of the store people to sew one of the buttons on Corduroy so she can buy him.”

“Who do we need to act this out?” asks Mrs. Brown. Raja volunteers to act in role as the Lisa, Farhani is Corduroy, and Inga is the mom. No one volunteers to be the store person.

“Nichole, would you like a turn?” Mrs. Brown asks. Nichole shakes her head no. “Amar, would you like to be the store person?”

“Is that the night watchman?” he asks.

“No,” answers Raja. “It’s the person who works at the desk. Do you want to be that?”

“Umm...okay,” says Amar in a hesitant manner.

The students proceed to the front of the carpet. "Raja, tell us again what's going on."

"Before Lisa left the store, she could ask her mom to ask the person working at the store if they could help sew the button on," replies Raja.

Farhani is confused and begins to act as the character Lisa. "Can you sew a button on?" he asks.

"You just sit on the shelf," directs Raja.

"You should be walking with your mom," Matthew directs from the audience. Raja walks over and takes a chair from one of the tables to use as a prop. Amar sits in it and mimes working at a desk. He pretends to be writing something. Raja begins the scene again, prompting the other actors with her dialogue.

"Mom, can you walk out of the store with me and look again at Corduroy?" she asks Inga. "Mom, can I tell the store person that Corduroy's button is missing?"

"Yes," answers Inga.

Raja walks over to Amar, who is still acting as though he is doing deskwork. "Corduroy is missing a button," she says to him. "Can you fix it?"

"Yes," he says. He takes the bear from her hands and begins to act as though he is sewing a button on Corduroy's overalls. He hands the bear back to Raja, who then shows Inga. The students observing from the carpet clap and the actors sit down.

"Lisa could have just asked her mom if when they got home if she could sew the button, but if she couldn't, she could have asked the store," suggests Naresh.

"Great idea! Let's do it!" encourages Mrs. Brown. "How many characters do we need?"

“We need four,” answers Naresh. “The mom, Corduroy, Lisa and the person at the store.” Madalynn volunteers to be Corduroy, Raja is the mom, Inga wants to be Lisa, and Matthew asks to be the person working at the store.

“Naresh, tell us what is happening again,” asks Mrs. Brown.

“Lisa can bring Corduroy home and mom can try and sew the button on and if she can’t they can go back to the store,” he prompts the actors.

Inga addresses Raja, “Mom, can you help me sew this?” she says as she takes the stuffed bear from Madalynn and hands it to Raja.

“But she can’t, remember?” Matthew calls from his spot as the store person, referring to Naresh’s alternative ending.

Raja takes the bear and looks it over. “I can’t do it,” she sighs. “Let’s go back to the store.” Raja and Inga walk over with the stuffed bear and Madalynn to Matthew, who is still sitting in the store person’s chair. They hand the bear to Matthew without saying anything.

“This will be easy,” he says as he pretends to sew the button on Corduroy’s overalls. “All done,” he says and hands the bear back to Inga. The students on the carpet clap and the actors sit down.

“Can we use the Corduroy bear during activity time?” Farhani asks Mrs. Brown.

“Sure!” she answers.

“We can use Corduroy and his book at the storey center and use him with other books about bears,” suggests Naresh.

“Great idea! Let’s put him in the book center right now,” responds Mrs. Brown. She takes the book and the bear and walks over to the book center where she places them on the shelf with the other books. “Anyone can use him!” she says.

10: Follow the Rules!

During this workshop students appeared to place a previously unobserved overemphasis on rules and procedures, often policing each other within the activities. An involved discussion acts as a precursor to the image activity, which required students to capture their ideas in the activities and discussion into pictures of when they have felt misunderstood in their personal lives.

The students are sitting on the carpet, waiting for their teacher to start the workshop. There is lots of talking, noise, and laughing occurring. Every student is at school today and the class is the noisiest I've heard them in the workshops we've had so far. Ian is bothering Nichole, trying to pull her book out of her hands. Dana and Matthew get into a disagreement as they both attempt to tattle on Ian to Mrs. Brown. Mrs. Brown calls for their attention and asks them to sit on the carpet in a circle so she can see their faces.

"We're going to start our circle," she instructs. "We have a new story book and we have a new warm-up activity and image response to do. Mrs. McLennan is here again," she says as she gestures in my direction. Some of the students wave hello to me. "I'm going to pass you an instrument randomly from our instrument box. Please keep it in a resting position until we're ready to start. What does that mean – a resting position?"

"Put it right here!" Naresh responds and points to his lap.

"Yes, that's right," answers Mrs. Brown. When I call your name, come and get your instrument. We're going to make some music today." Each student is called one by one and given a musical instrument: Matthew (maraca), Inga (tambourine), Raja (sand paper), Farhani (jingle bells), Ian (tambourine), Hassan (scratcher), Naresh (cymbals), Dana (big maraca), Amar (castanets), Madalynn (flapper), and Nichole (triangle). The students are excited and lots of "ohhing" and "ahhing" is heard as each instrument is

passed out. Some students disregard Mrs. Brown's request to place the instrument in a resting position, and instead are experiment with playing their instrument, or are examining it closely as Amar is, holding it right up to his face to have an inspection of what he is about to play. Ian begins speaking in his native language, interrupting Mrs. Brown as she calls each student's name to come and receive an instrument.

"We're going to be in a band and I'm the conductor. Sometimes Mrs. O does this and she points at different people and then it's their turn to play." Mrs. Brown holds a reading pointer and uses it to gesture at the students as she talks. "If I point at you, it's your turn to play your instrument. When I point, play your music. Let's practice." Mrs. Brown randomly points at different students and they begin using their instrument, each creating sounds using different rhymes and volume. The sound becomes almost ritualistic, with some students closing their eyes as they play and others holding their instruments high above their heads, accentuating each movement with flicks of their wrists. "Good! You can stop now," directs Mrs. Brown. "I need someone to become the conductor," she asks. Amar, Farhani, Matthew, Madalynn, Raja and Inga all have their hands up, waving in the air. "Before you play your instrument, while you're waiting, who do you need to look at?" asks Mrs. Brown.

"The instructor!" calls out Raja.

"No, the inductor," Naresh attempts to correct her. "I mean the conductor."

Farhani is chosen to become the conductor. He trades places with Mrs. Brown; she sits in his spot with his instrument and he takes the pointer and sits in her rocking chair. He has an enormous grin on his face. Slowly, Farhani begins to point at each

student in a counter-clockwise direction, giving them the sign to start playing their instrument.

Matthew appears not pleased with Farhani's conducting and yells, "You don't have to do it like that!" Matthew begins to play his instrument before Farhani has given him the signal.

Farhani notices Matthew. "I didn't tell you too!" he argues. Matthew immediately stops playing his maraca. After a moment he points to Matthew to begin playing. He does. Now everyone is participating, playing their instruments in different rhythms. Farhani tells the students that when he points to them, they need to stop playing. Everyone follows this direction with the exception of Hassan and Naresh who are reluctant to stop when they are pointed at. Farhani verbally asks them to stop and they do so. All the instruments are now in a resting position.

Farhani looks over at Mrs. Brown and asks, "Can I choose who goes next?" She nods her head yes. "I choose Hassan," he says.

Hassan runs over to the rocking chair and trades roles with Farhani. He starts calling students by the name for them to begin playing their instruments.

"Don't call their name Hassan," says Mrs. Brown. "Remember to use the pointer to conduct the musicians." Hassan begins to conduct the music, choosing all the students with instruments that shake first. The music appears to be much louder and faster this second time, almost with a frenzied quality. Inga begins to bang her tambourine high above her head with a quick thump. The other students seem to follow her lead, syncing their playing to her rhythm. Hassan suddenly stops the music, quickly pointing at each student in a clockwise direction around the circle. Hassan chooses Naresh to go next.

Naresh walks over to the rocking chair and takes his place in it, looking very seriously at the students around the circle. Matthew is not looking at Naresh and does not appear ready to begin, so Naresh calls his name. One by one the students begin to play their music with Naresh smiling as he directs the instruments. Inga sings the “Jingle Bells” Christmas song as she shakes the bells on the side of her tambourine. Ian begins to yell for everyone to stop. He puts his fingers in his ears to indicate the music has become too loud. One by one Naresh directs the students to stop playing the music. He returns to his spot on the carpet and Mrs. Brown calls each student over so they can put their instruments back in the music box.

“We’re going to snuggle close in a story bunch for a story,” Mrs. Brown explains as she shows students the book *Bunny Cakes* (Wells, 1997). Matthew and Ian are having difficulty sitting next to each other so Mrs. Brown asks them to move apart and sit on opposite sides of the carpet.

“I’ve seen this movie before!” Madalynn calls out, referring to the Max and Ruby children’s television show on one of the cable channels. Mrs. Brown proceeds to read the story to the students. At the end of the story she asks them to answer some questions as part of the group discussion.

“What’s happening to Max in this story?” Mrs. Brown asks.

“Max always tries to write, but he keeps writing it wrong and the grocer doesn’t understand it,” shares Naresh.

“Do you think that Max feels like he’s being understood, that the grocer knows what he wants?” Some of the students shake their heads no. “Tell me about some of the problems Max has in the story.”

Only Naresh raises his hand. "Max never got what he wanted from the store."

"Why?" questions Mrs. Brown.

Naresh responds again. "He wanted red hot marshmallow squirter candies. He was trying to do the same thing."

"I need a friend to tell me a time when they were not being understood," prompts Mrs. Brown. "Maybe you were trying to explain something to someone."

Madalynn raises her hand. "I wanted to say I love you to my mom and she wasn't listening, she didn't hear me."

"I asked my dad if I could have a cup of milk but he wasn't listening to me."

Farhani volunteers to share his idea. "Last time we were going to the movies and we were getting a game, I asked my brother a question and he wasn't listening. I wanted to ask him a different question."

"Once when my brother was playing my mom said goodbye to him, and it was my turn and he didn't listen to me," says Hassan.

Raja puts up her hand. "Once I asked my dad if I could eat if I wanted and he wasn't listening to me."

"Everyone always listens to me," boasts Matthew.

"Amar, what do you think?" Mrs. Brown asks.

"Um...sometimes my mom doesn't listen to me until I ask her more times." Amar shares.

"At home my mom listens to everything I say," smiles Dana.

"You're lucky!" replies Mrs. Brown. "The reason I am asking you to tell me about when someone is not listening to you is because today I would like you to draw me

a picture of a time when you felt you were not being listened to or understood. I have special coloured crayons at the tables and you can use the new crayons for your drawing.”

Each student receives a piece of paper. Some get right to work and draw scenes that depict times when they felt they were not being listened to. Others have difficulty putting their thoughts onto paper and take some time deciding what to draw. Ian refuses to participate in this activity and sits at the table refusing to draw. He only does so with gentle encouragement from his teacher.

Figure 13: “My sister is not listening to me” by Inga



“I’m mad because my sister is not listening to me. I was sad. My sister needs to come home.” (Inga)

In Inga’s picture there is an observable difference in size between the two girls.

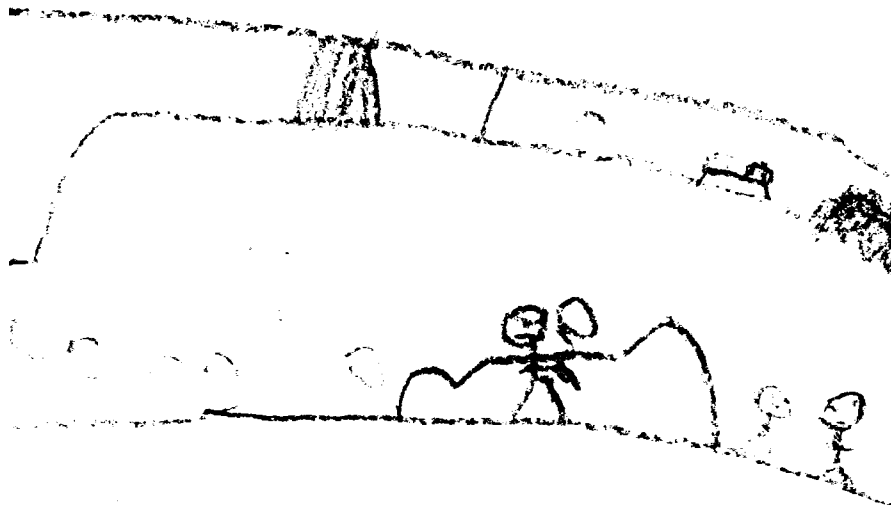
Figure 14: “My brother is not listening to me” by Farhani



“I was asking my brother something that was very important. He was not listening to me.
I was sad. (Farhani)

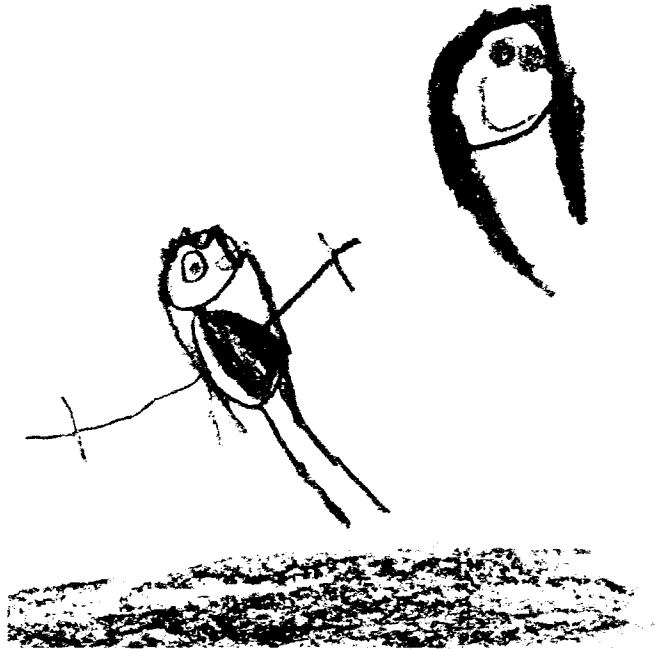
This is a very simplistic drawing. The bodies are missing from each person. Farhani originally drew the skin colour in green and then changed it to brown when a classmate observed aloud to Farhani that Farhani’s skin was brown, not green. One wonders who the third person in this picture is.

Figure 15: “My brother still didn’t listen to me” by Hassan



“I was telling my brother to give me the Nintendo TS. My brother was not listening and he still didn’t listen. Then my mom told him to share it. She took it from my brother and gave it to me.” (Hassan)

Figure 16: “My mom would not give me a toy” by Dana



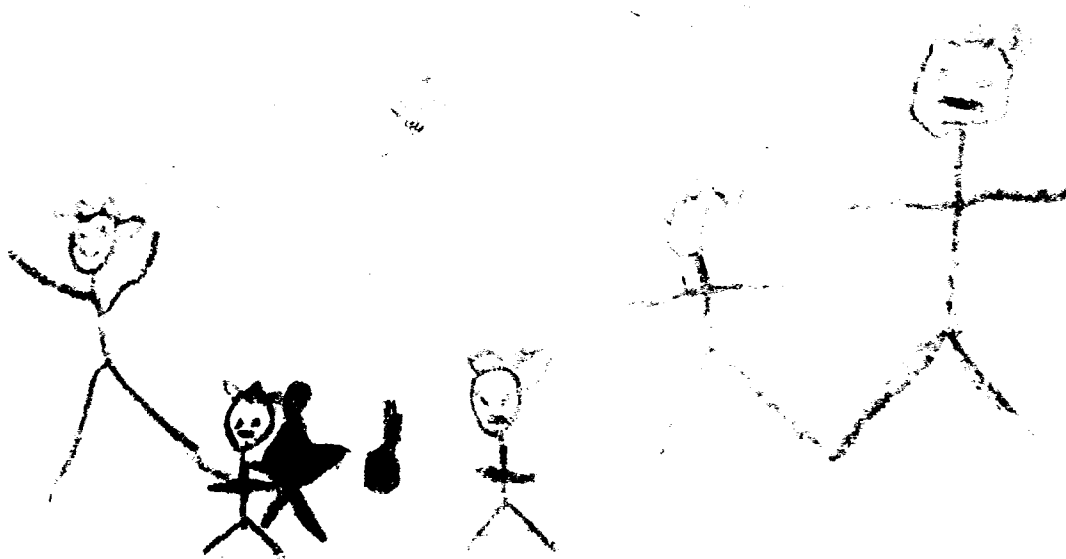
“I was sad because my mom would not give me my toy. She would not listen.” (Dana)
It is interesting that Dana is describing herself as being sad, but both people in the picture have smiling faces.

Figure 17: “I was going to buy a scooter” by Naresh



“I was going to buy a scooter but my dad wasn’t listening to me.” (Naresh)

Figure 18: "I'm not letting him play with my toy" by Matthew



“My cousin wants to play with the toy that I have, but I’m not letting him. I just didn’t let him because I thought he was going to break it.” (Matthew)

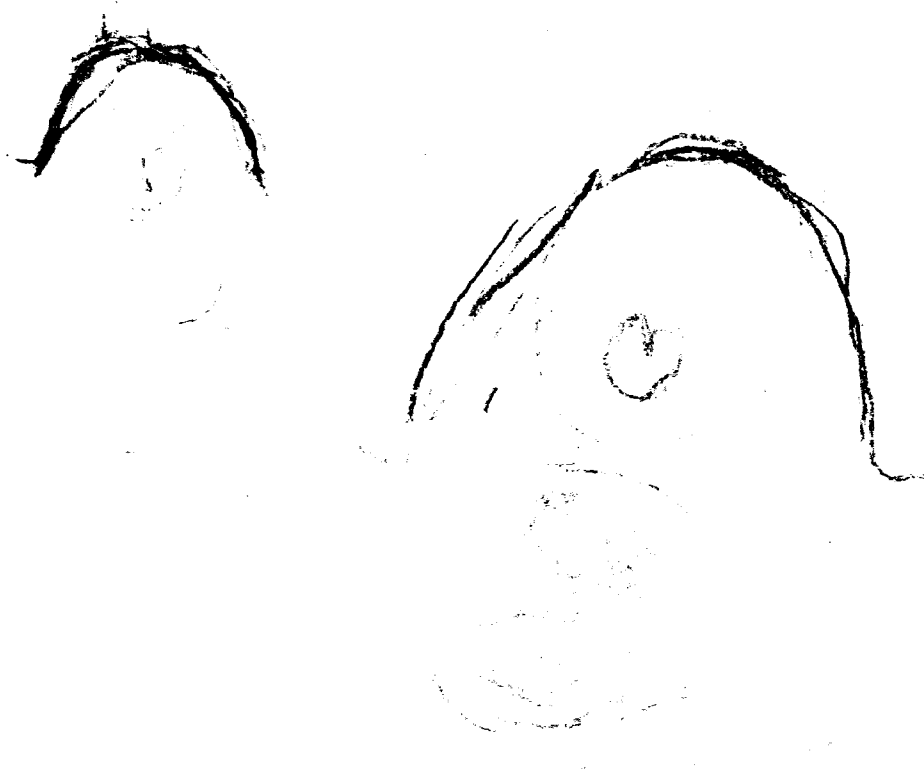
Students were asked to draw pictures of when they felt they were being misunderstood or not listened to. Matthew decided to draw a picture of when he was not listening to someone else.

Figure 19: “My dad would not listen” by Raja



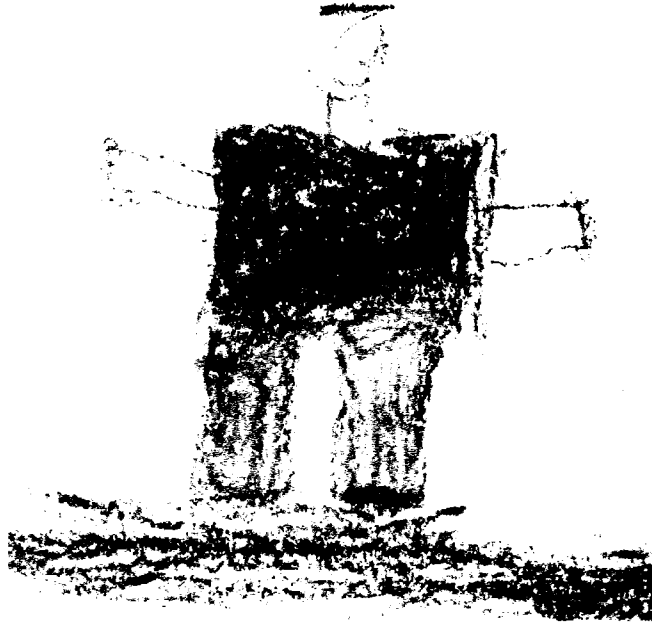
“I was asking if I could get my crowns and wands but my dad would not listen.” (Raja)
Raja has included much detail and clarity in this picture. One wonders if her Dad is not listening because he is too busy watching the t.v. or computer.

Figure 20: “Can I have some ice cream” by Madalynn



“When I was asking at the park, ‘could we have some ice cream’ my mom wasn’t listening. I went to my dad and he wasn’t listening either. And they listened when they were finished talking.” (Madalynn)

Figure 21: “My sister’s really making me mad sometimes” by Amar



“When I’m mad, my sister’s making me really mad sometimes.” (Amar)

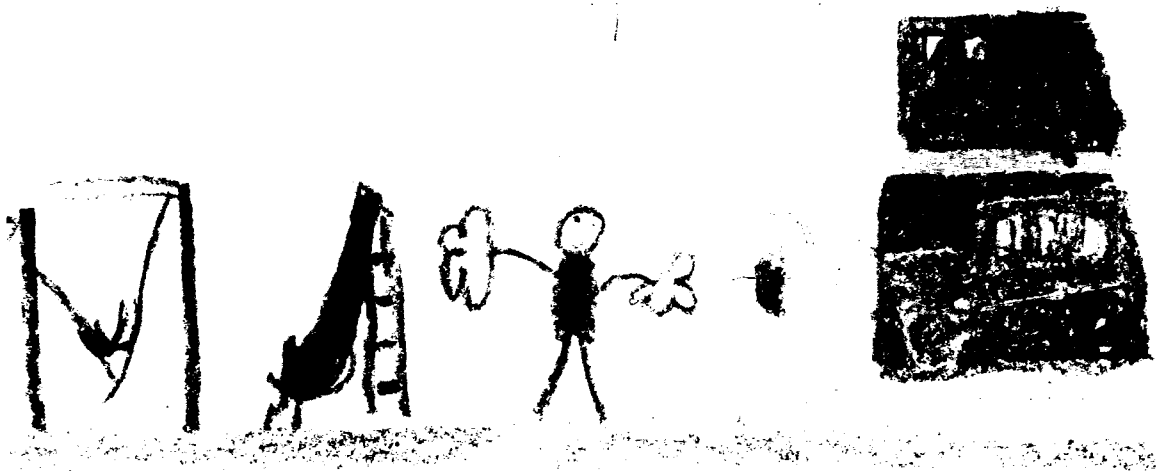
Figure 22: “Ian is sad” by Ian



“My sister is happy. Ian is sad sister took his car.” (Ian)

Ian clearly understood the directions of this image activity. He was also able to clearly explain his picture using English words.

Figure 23: “Not going to Chucky Cheese” by Nichole



“My mom is not letting me go to Chucky Cheese. I am sad.” (Nichole)
This picture is very detailed. Note that both people are smiling even though one is described as being sad.

11: Much Excitement and Participation in Activities

There was much excitement and participation in the creative movement activities. Most students appeared to participate actively in the whole group warm-ups, while only certain students participated in individual roles in the main sociodramas. Mrs. Brown is observed to be encouraging and reinforcing student participation often through verbal prompts and directions. Students are very active and involved in their role-playing of issues and improvised solutions to the Bunny Cakes book.

The students are very rambunctious on the carpet today while waiting for Mrs. Brown to begin the workshop. A number of them are yelling across the carpet at each other in loud voices. Matthew approaches Mrs. Brown to tattle on some other students. Mrs. Brown sends him back to his spot on the carpet.

“Okay!” calls Mrs. Brown, attempting to get the students’ attention. “Everyone stand up. I’m going to put a random CD on and I don’t know what kind of music it’s going to be. It’s a surprise! You get to move your body to the music however you want – either to the beat or the rhythm or the different sounds you hear.”

The students start to murmur with excitement.

“Yes!” Farhani and Naresh slap five.

“We get to dance!” calls out Ian. All the students stand and ready themselves. Inga stands with her hands on her hips and swivels her body. Nichole begins to hop on one spot. Hassan begins to roll and unroll the bottom of his shirt. After a moment’s delay fast, upbeat music with happy lyrics begins to play. Immediately all the students begin to move except for Matthew. Amar clasps his hands together and starts to swing them to the beat. Madalynn is wiggling around. After a moment some of the students slow their movements down and look to their teacher for ideas. Mrs. Brown is squatting to the music. Some of the students begin to copy her. Noticing that the students are copying her

movements, Mrs. Brown begins to encourage their individuality and compliments those students who are engaging in their own actions.

“Nice job Farhani! I like how you are bouncing Nichole. Wow! Great idea Madalynn!” she praises. Amar looks to Farhani when Mrs. Brown calls his name and notices that Farhani is copying him. He immediately changes his movements into a more complex dance. Hassan stands on one foot and balances. Nichole and Madalynn also appear to be engaging in similar movements. Matthew stops his movements half way through the song and stands for the remainder of it with his arms crossed in front of his body.

“Look at me! Look at me!” Inga calls to Mrs. Brown. The song ends and Mrs. Brown begins another one. The music is slow and relaxing with no lyrics. Many students continue with their fast, hurried movements from the previous song and do not adjust their movements to reflect the new music. Nichole and Madalynn are the first students to slow their motions down. Many of the others notice and do the same thing. Naresh and Hassan engage in what appears to be a ritualistic, animal dance, pretending to open their mouths to growl and bare their teeth while clawing and nipping at each other. Farhani is in his own space, rolling his arms up high and then down low. Matthew begins the dance performing some slow arm movements, but again by the end of the song he is standing motionless on the side of the carpet. Mrs. Brown encourages him by asking him if he can move his body in a slow way. He shakes his head no. Ian pretends to swing his arms into people and this bothers them as they yell for him to stop. Mrs. Brown asks him to move into another space where he is not immediately next to another student.

A third song with a fast beat and very silly lyrics is played. Ian shuffles his way over to where the other students are and he is now touching people when creating his movements. Mrs. Brown asks him to stop touching people. She moves so she is standing directly next to Ian. Matthew is still not moving to the music, standing in the same spot that he was in for the previous two songs. Eventually he begins to slowly move his hands. As the song progresses Ian pretends to become a lion and crawls around on the floor. Other students begin to imitate him and the dancing students have turned into a herd of lions. As the chorus of the song resumes the students stand up and jump from spot to spot. Some begin clapping their hands and then towards the end of the song all students are standing and clapping their hands. Farhani begins to wildly touch his knees together while clapping and the rest of the students copy him. Madalynn is clapping while moving her whole body around. The song ends and many students flop to the floor, breathing heavy and laughing. As they sit down, they still rhythmically are clapping their hands even though the song has ended.

“Let’s look at the *Bunny Cakes* (Wells, 1997) book again,” says Mrs. Brown. “Come close for a story bunch. That was nice because we got to move our bodies around before we read our story.” Mrs. Brown stops talking and looks over at Ian. He is touching people again. Mrs. Brown redirects him and begins reading the story. Students chime in and say phrases at familiar parts of the story. “Is Max being understood in this story?” asks Mrs. Brown. “Yesterday we drew pictures to represent when we felt that we weren’t being understood. I need you to help me think. What we’re going to do is think of a problem in the book. Then we’re going to think about what the characters could have done differently to solve or fix the problem.” Mrs. Brown looks again at Ian. He is still

touching things so she asks him to leave the carpet and sit on a chair away from the group.

“Tell me about one of the problems in the story,” requests Mrs. Brown.

“Max kept knocking the flour over,” replies Madalynn.

“We need a Max and Ruby. I’ll be Ruby,” calls out Inga.

“I’ll be Max,” answers Madalynn. Both girls stand and walk over to a table closest to the carpet. There are materials on the table for play dough (for activity time). Inga grabs some of the tools and begins to mime that she is cooking. She pretends to hold a bowl in her arm and stirs it with the play dough roller.

“I’m baking a cake,” Inga says to Madalynn.

“The flour has to fall over,” Madalynn reminds Inga. Madalynn picks up a bag of play dough on the table and pretends it is a bag of flour. She drops it to the floor. “It fell!” she says and frowns.

“What do I say? I forget!” Inga addresses the students in the audience. “Oh right,” she immediately replies. “I’ll write a list.” Inga pretends to write a list and hands an imaginary piece of paper to Madalynn. “Take this list to the grocery store,” she says and Madalynn takes the imaginary paper and walks away with it.

“What could they have done differently so that Max and Ruby didn’t have their problem or so that they could have fixed the problem?” asks Mrs. Brown.

“Max could have just helped Ruby to make the cake right from the start,” suggests Naresh.

“And the flour wouldn’t have spilled?” clarifies Mrs. Brown. Naresh shakes his head yes in response. “Okay, let’s act it out.” No other students volunteer to take the actors places.

Inga mimes making a cake again. Madalynn walks over to her.

“Can I help you bake the cake?” asks Madalynn.

“Yes,” Inga says. The two girls work together and mime passing ingredients back and forth while stirring an imaginary bowl.

“The flour does not spill on the floor,” observes Inga. The girls sit down on the carpet.

“What about another problem?” asks Mrs. Brown. At this point, two Gr. 8 students knock on the classroom door, interrupting the students. They needed to take a class picture of the students for the Gr. 8 yearbook. When they are finished, the workshop resumed.

“Okay, where were we?” asks Mrs. Brown.

“When Max spilled the milk,” calls out Farhani.

“You’re right,” acknowledges Mrs. Brown. “Don’t bump the milk said Ruby in the story but it was too late.” Farhani volunteers to be Max and Raja wants to be Ruby. They proceed to the table and Raja uses the play dough tools and table as props for the scene. She is not satisfied with the materials at hand, so she walks over to the dramatic play center and brings back a cup and plastic play eggs. She begins to mime making a cake, similar to Inga in the previous scene.

“Can I help you?” said Farhani.

“You need to give me the eggs,” directs Raja, “and don’t bump the table.”

Farhani begins to reach for the props to hand Raja. “Don’t bump the table Max!” cries Raja. Farhani bumps the table and pretends to knock over the cup of milk.

“I’m going to write a list,” she says. She mimes writing a grocery list for Farhani.

“Don’t forget the eggs!” Matthew directs from the audience.

“No, we have eggs,” Raja addresses Matthew’s comment. “I need milk. I’m going to write a list.” She continues to mime writing the list and hands it to Farhani. He takes the imaginary piece of paper from her and walks away.

“How can they fix this problem?” asks Mrs. Brown.

“Maybe he could have helped. Max could say that he will go to his room and play and Ruby will say that when the cake is done he can come back out,” suggests Inga.

“And Max won’t help at all?” questions Mrs. Brown. Inga nods her head in agreement. The scene is acted out again. Raja mimes baking a cake at the table and Farhani walks across the room to the other side where he sits down and pretends to play.

“I’m making a cake!” Raja calls out to him. “I’m going to add the flour, eggs, and I’m going to use a spoon to make it.” She continues to mime mixing ingredients and making the cake. “Max, the cake is ready!” she calls and Farhani comes running over to look at what she has done. He smiles and pretends to eat a piece of it. The students in the audience laugh at his antics.

“Another problem?” Mrs. Brown asks. Matthew has his hand up.

“The eggs fell down and cracked open and made a big mess at the beginning of the story. It is interesting to observe that students are focusing on the minor problems in the story like Max clumsily knocking things in the kitchen over instead of the bigger

issues like siblings not sharing or getting along, or Max constantly being misunderstood by the grocer. Amar volunteers to be Max and Inga is Ruby. They stand by the play dough table and Inga mimes making a cake. Amar does not move or speak. They engage like this within the scene for about a minute.

“Remember, Max wants to help,” prompts Mrs. Brown.

“Can I help?” asks Amar.

“No!” snaps Inga. “Don’t touch ANYTHING!”

“Too late,” says Amar. “I accidentally dropped the eggs.” Inga hands the plastic eggs to Amar and he dramatically raises his arm up high and drops them. “Too late,” he repeats.

“I have to write a grocery list then,” she tells Amar. She pretends to write the list, hands it to Amar and he walks away as if he were going to the store.

From the audience Raja calls out, “Max could have listened to what Ruby said which is don’t touch anything.”

Amar and Inga begin the scene again with Inga baking the cake and Amar standing by, watching her. “Max, don’t touch anything!” she warns. He doesn’t touch anything and Inga pretends to finish the cake. “All done!” she says as she holds up an imaginary cake.

“How about the grandma?” asks Nichole from the audience. Matthew is sitting next to her, staring into space and putting the collar of his shirt in his mouth.

Farhani raises his hand. “When Max went to the store the grocer didn’t listen to him, three times he didn’t listen to Max. I want to be Max when he went to get red hot marshmallow squirters each time. The time he went the third time and tries to get red hot

marshmallow squirters when he also got flour.” Farhani agrees to act as Max and Madalynn volunteers to be the grocer. Both walk over to the play dough table and begin to arrange the items. Farhani mimes giving the grocery list to Madalynn and she looks at it.

“You need flour,” Madalynn says and hands him a bag of play dough from the table. “Here are your red hot marshmallow squirters too,” and hands him a small bag of play dough tools.

“He got the candy right away?” asks Mrs. Brown and both actors smile and nod their heads yes. “You skipped right to the solution! Perfect timing because we need to line up because we’re late for music!”

12: ☆ Our ☆ Own Ideas

Students grow from exploring situations represented in picture books to brainstorming, role-playing and resolving issues and problems relevant to their lives. In today's session each sociodrama explored conflicts suggested personally by students. Students were able to successfully represent and resolve topics of importance to them. There was an observable distinction between students who wanted to act in sociodrama scenes, and others who appeared more comfortable in role of spectator.

The students sit on the carpet, waiting to begin the workshop. They are very loud and active today, squirming in their spots and not following the usual morning routine of looking at picture books while waiting to begin. Matthew appears unfocused today, he has not chosen a picture book and is instead bothering other students by leaning into their personal space and talking and shaking his head right in front of their faces. A few students turn their heads away in response while others call for Mrs. Brown.

“Okay,” Mrs. Brown says, attempting to get their attention. She is seated in her rocking chair. “Today is our last drama class with Mrs. McLennan. After today she is going to look at all the notes she has been typing on her laptop and write a big report on how we did drama in our class. You have been great actors and actresses and Mrs. McLennan is going to write a book about you!” Inga and Raja appear visibly upset at the news that today is my last day. Inga frowns and looks in my direction and Raja shakes her head no. Mrs. Brown addresses Matthew and asks him to stop touching the objects and people sitting near him. He ignores her requests so she asks him to move from his spot on the carpet and sit next to her chair.

“We have a new game to play!” explains Mrs. Brown. “With this game, I’m going to have a bag for you to examine. There is something inside the bag, but I’m not going to tell you ahead of time what that is. You need to put your hand in the bag and feel the

object and think about what it might be. We're going to guess what is in the bag after everyone has had a turn feeling the object. If you pull out what is in the bag when it's your turn to feel it, is that following the rules of the game?" The students shake their head no. "If you call out what you think the object is before everyone has had a turn to feel it, is that following the rules of the game?" Again the students shake their head no. "You might want to close your eyes when feeling the object to help you think about what is in the bag." Mrs. Brown holds the bag in her hand and proceeds to let each student put one hand in the bag and feel what in inside, one at a time. The students remain silent as they wait for their turn. "Do you have your guess in your head?" Mrs. Brown asks out loud as the last few students feel in the bag. The last student finished feeling the object. "What do you think it is," she asks?

"A telephone," says Raja.

"The telephone," repeats Naresh.

"A telephone," says Inga.

"An egg," guesses Madalynn.

"Maybe a pear," says Farhani. "Or a walkie talkie?"

"Maybe it's a remote control?" asks Naresh.

"Maybe a dinosaur?" says Dana.

Mrs. Brown listens to each student's guess. "Let's find out," she says as she reaches into the bag and pulls out the toy phone from the dramatic play center. "Lots of our friends had great ideas! Some even guessed the phone. Let's do it again!" She asks the students to close their eyes and she replaces the phone with another object. Just as before, she asks the students to open their eyes and take turns feeling the object in the

bag. As she is holding the bag for a student, Matthew pretends to be holding two guns, one in each hand. He pretends to shoot the students across the circle from him, making a 'pow' noise under his breath. Mrs. Brown does not notice him. The students finish feeling the object in the bag. Many have their hands up, waiting to share what they think is in the bag.

"Okay," Mrs. Brown says. "What do you think?"

"I think it's a sponge," says Nichole as she participates for the first time in this workshop.

"A sponge!" repeats Hassan.

"A cotton that feels like a sponge?" says Naresh.

"Nothing is in there!" blurts Farhani.

"I think it's foam," says Inga confidently.

"Cloth?" wonders Madalynn.

"Fluff!" calls out Raja.

"A soft...um...dinosaur...that feels like a sponge," suggests Matthew.

"Great ideas! Let's find out!" Mrs. Brown says as she reaches her hand into the bag and pulls out a square of sponge used for painting at the craft center. "We've talked about the five senses before. You have to use your taste, smell, ear, sight and today you used your..."

"Touch!" Naresh spontaneously calls out.

"Yes! You're right! You have to use your touch sense to figure out what is in the bag. Now, let's work together. For many of the drama workshops that we have done you have looked at problems that people have had. Some of these people have been in books

(she holds up the four picture books used in previous workshops) and some have been from our lives. Let's work together to think of times that we have had trouble or problems in our own lives that we want to think about. Let's look again at our book covers to think about what we have talked about. Sharing with others (holds up *We Share Everything*), being angry with others (holds up *I Was So Mad*), losing something important to us (holds up *Corduroy*), and being misunderstood (holds up *Bunny Cakes*). I want you to come up with your idea and think about maybe at school, or home, or the playground or park and if there was a problem you had. Maybe this problem didn't make you feel so great. Today we're going to act out some of our own problems and find ideas for how we can fix or prevent them. Tell me a story you'd like to explore."

Inga is the only student to raise her hand. "My dad didn't understand me when I asked for my chair in the back of the car."

"Can you explain that even more?" clarifies Mrs. Brown.

"There was a noise and my dad told me that he didn't want to hear the noise and for me to stop making it. I told him that I didn't do it, that I wasn't making the noise. He didn't understand me. The noise happened itself. I told him that. I told him that I wasn't making the noise. I felt sad that he didn't understand that I wasn't making the noise. He thought I was making the noise."

"Let's act that out," suggests Mrs. Brown. She then redirects Matthew who is touching everything and everyone around him. "Let's act out Inga's story," she repeats, "and then we'll think about what Inga or her dad could have done differently to fix or prevent the problem. Who wants to be Inga?"

“I do!” shouts out Inga. She stands up. “Wait, I don’t want to be myself anymore. I tell the story and watch,” she says. Raja puts up her hand to volunteer to be Inga.

“Who is going to be the dad?” asks Mrs. Brown.

“I will!” says Farhani. Raja and Farhani stand up. They each get two chairs from a nearby table. They set the chairs up so they are one in front of the other. Farhani sits in the front chair and Raja sits behind him. Farhani pretends to be holding a steering wheel. He uses both hands to turn the wheel. Raja makes a squeaking sound with her chair.

“Stop making that squeaking sound!” booms Farhani.

“I’m not making it!” says Raja. Raja moves her chair again and makes another squeaky sound.

“I said stop making that noise!” orders Farhani.

“I’m not making that noise, my chair is!” replies Raja. Mrs. Brown addresses Ian in the audience who is fidgeting in his spot and grabbing materials off the shelf.

“How can they solve this?” asks Mrs. Brown.

Inga calls out, “The dad could tell her to just leave the chair alone and to sit still so the chair doesn’t move.” The actors resume their positions. Farhani grips the imaginary steering wheel.

“Did you put your seat belt back on?” Raja asks Farhani. They both sit in silence as Farhani pretends to drive.

“Don’t forget!” Inga shouts from the audience.

“Make sure you sit still,” reminds the dad. No squeaking noise is heard from the chair and Farhani continues to drive. They both smile.

“That was easy to do,” says Farhani as he and Raja end the scene and walk back to their spots on the carpet.

“How about another activity?” asks Mrs. Brown. Madalynn raises her hand.

“When me and my sister weren’t sharing. We were playing pet shop and she wanted the fish and I wanted the fish and we couldn’t share it. We had a fight over it.” Madalynn volunteers to act as herself and Inga wants to be the sister.

“We need a fish,” says Mrs. Brown as the two girls stand from their spots on the carpet and walk over to a table. Madalynn then walks over to the toy animal bin on a shelf and picks out an animal to use in the scene.

“What do I say?” whispers Inga to Madalynn.

“We both want the animal and we have to fight over it,” Madalynn whispers back.

Both girls begin to pull and tug on the plastic animal while saying, “I want it, I want it.”

“Good! Freeze!” calls out Mrs. Brown. “How can they fix this?”

Naresh raises his hand. “They could just share it, each of them take one turn and then the other can take a turn.”

“I don’t understand what you mean,” Inga calls out from her spot in the scene.

“Both of you play with it by taking turns because Inga can pretend to put it in the pet shop and then Madalynn can take it out and they can take turns,” Naresh clarifies.

Mrs. Brown redirects Ian again. He is not paying any attention to the drama and has been spending the majority the session looking around the classroom or picking with his fingers at the carpet, his clothing, or his peers. Inga walks over to the toy shelf and picks up a dollhouse.

“This is the pet shop,” she explains as she brings it over and sets it on a table near where Madalynn was standing. Madalynn takes the plastic animal, plays with it for minute, and places it in the pet shop. Inga then removes the animal from the pet shop, plays with it and replaces it. This process happens a few times. They girls do not say anything as they engage in this solution to the problem.

“Nice job,” praises Mrs. Brown. “We have time for one more before music class.”

Madalynn raises her hand. “That problem happened yesterday and I keep thinking about it,” she explains to Mrs. Brown.

“My story happened when my dad was taking my mom to her job,” Inga calls out.

“That’s okay,” encourages Mrs. Brown. We can come up with a plan and then next time it happens we know what to do. Any other ideas?”

Naresh raises his hand. “I was going outside and my dad wouldn’t let me and I asked him if I could go play with my friends and he didn’t understand and I couldn’t go. Can I act as myself?”

“Sure,” replies Mrs. Brown. “Who wants to be Naresh’s dad?” Farhani is the only student with his hand up. The two boys proceed over to the table that has been used as a staging area for each of today’s scenes.

“Dad, can I go to the park?” acts Naresh.

“No you can’t,” replies Farhani.

“Why no?” asks Naresh.

Improvising a response that Naresh did not include in his original story, Farhani replies by saying, “Because it’s raining outside.”

Surprised by Farhani’s answer, Naresh says, “But it’s not even raining.”

Continuing with his impromptu performance, Farhani says, "I need you to help me clean the house!" Both boys stop the scene and look towards their teacher.

"Great job!" she says.

"I made that one up!" Farhani grins proudly.

"That's great!" Mrs. Brown responds. "You improvised parts of the story! What can they do differently?" Mrs. Brown addresses the audience. She then calls Ian's name as he is unfocused again.

Raja has an idea. "Maybe the mom could have just cleaned the house and Naresh's dad could have just taken him outside to the park."

"What?" says Farhani.

"Maybe the mom can clean the house so you can go to the park with your dad," Raja repeats.

"That means we need a mom for this scene," observes Mrs. Brown.

No one has his or her hand up to volunteer except for Raja. Mrs. Brown chooses her and asks her to join the boys. Raja stands next to Farhani.

"Can I go outside?" pleads Naresh.

"Where are you going?" questions Farhani.

"Farhani, you need to ask me if I can clean up the house for you," whispers Raja.

"Can you clean the house for us so we can go outside?" Farhani asks Raja.

"Okay!" answers Raja.

"Wonderful!" calls out Mrs. Brown. Come back to the carpet so we can talk about that. "What do you think about using drama to help us explore our problems?"

“We did drama and next time we have a problem we can think about what we did in circle and use those ideas,” reflects Naresh,

“I can use these ideas when I fight with my sister,” shares Raja.

“When I act like someone else it makes me feel like I’m a different person, living in a different place,” Inga says. It is time for music so the students are readied for their next subject. Mrs. Brown reminds them that I won’t be back tomorrow because this workshop was our last together. All students except Nichole, Matthew and Ian come running over to me and give me a spontaneous group hug.

CHAPTER V: ARTIST/RESEARCHER/TEACHERS'S COMMENTARY

Themes that emerged from the implementation of twelve sociodrama workshops with students in one Senior Kindergarten class and their teacher were explored. In particular, how I observed the kindergarten students experiencing the sociodramatic activities was of particular interest to me. Using modified activities outlined in the sociodramatic work of Boal (1985, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006) including modified aspects of Theatre of the Oppressed and Aesthetics of the Oppressed, Mrs. Brown and I designed the twelve sociodrama workshops to provide multiple opportunities for students to examine, enact, and reflect upon issues, themes, and ideas of personal and collective importance. Artistic and textual data were collected continuously in order to explore the effects and transference of issues and themes resulting from work within twelve sociodrama workshops. Ten themes emerged from the workshops including: sociodrama appeared possible with this particular class of Senior Kindergarten students, some difficulties emerged when implementing the sociodrama with these young children, Mrs. Brown's role facilitating sociodrama went beyond that of the traditional joker role in Theatre of the Oppressed, moments of empathy and care were observed occurring within the drama, the traditional structure of this particular classroom appeared to limit the full sociodramatic possibility, students appeared able to consistently find solutions to concerns within the drama, different levels of student participation and commitment to the sociodrama were observed, leadership roles within students emerged, reoccurring student themes emerged in the sociodrama, and students experimented with different societal roles.

Senior Kindergarten Experiences Within the Sociodrama Workshops

Sociodrama appears possible with Senior Kindergarten Students

Originally intended as a theatrical method that allowed participants the opportunity to explore and resolve individual and collective oppressions with adults, sociodrama has been used extensively with a number of social groups to raise self-esteem and awareness including the elderly, assault victims, teenage mothers, AIDS patients, and victimized women (Campbell, 1994; Fisher, 1994; Nelson, 1993; Rodriguez, Rich, Hastings, & Page, 2006; Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994; Schweizer, 1994). Some studies have examined its use with older students in educational settings, but few exist documenting the use of sociodrama with kindergarten students (Amatruda, 2006; Creekmore & Madan, 1981; Johnson, 2001; Kumar & Treadwell, 2006; O'Toole & Burton, 2002; Riley, 1990; Rosenthal & Tetel-Hanks, 1981).

In order for successful sociodrama to occur in an educational setting, students must be engaged in and respond to a number of activities (Eckloff, 2006; Riley, 1990). First, participants must participate in warm-up activities. Group dialogue must occur next so that a common social issue or concern is being examined. Participants then select a scenario or story from this discussion and role-play it exactly as it was described. During or at the conclusion of the role-play participants and audience members suggest alternative responses or resolutions to the issue being explored in the sociodrama. These are then improvised as the participants explore alternative actions and reactions to the issue at hand (Boal, 1985, 2002, 2006; Riley, 1990; Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994; Torrance, 1975).

Warm-up Activities

For the purposes of this study I selected the warm-ups that began each workshop from Boal's (2002) *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* as a way of preparing students for their participation in the sociodramatic work. These activities allowed students to focus and strengthen their bodies' muscles, senses, memory, imagination, and emotion in preparation for the different roles and situations they were going to experience in the workshops. Boal states that warm-ups are essential for participants before engaging in sociodramatic work because the games and exercises help "de-mechani[ze] or re-tun[e]" (2002, p.30) the actor out of his or her personal, repetitive actions and responses and helps to prepare each person to "take on the mechanizations of the character he is going to play" (p.30).

By observing moments from the drama, field notes, and journal entries, it was apparent that although a specific group of the same students appeared to engage repeatedly in the main sociodrama activities, in each workshop every student in the class participated actively in the warm-up activities with the exception of Matthew who refused to participate in workshops seven and eleven. Students such as Nichole and Ian, who were very uninvolved participants in the sociodrama scenes, participated wholeheartedly in each warm-up activity. The level of student activity and engagement in the warm-ups also appeared to evolve as the workshops progressed. Field notes and journal entries reveal that in workshop one, students participated with much prompting, encouragement, and suggestions for movement from their teacher. In workshop four, students began to prompt one another within the activities, and by the eighth and ninth workshop students were manipulating the activities so they were extending the

performance (for example in the “What has changed” activity, students such as Ian, Amar, Farhani and Hassan were changing more than the required one item at a time). By the end of the workshops students such as Farhani and Inga were volunteering repeatedly to participate in warm-up activities. Students also appeared to be building upon previous warm-ups. The “Round of Rhythm and Movement” warm-up for workshop nine appeared very similar to the “Animals” activity in workshop five. Field notes reveal that students often appeared spontaneous and very uninhibited in their movements and responses within the activities.

The Sociodramatic Discussion and Activity

After the warm-up activity had been completed, the Mrs. Brown would gather students on the communal classroom carpet to discuss briefly the warm-up activity, and then to engage students in discussion regarding some shared social issue or concern that they were facing as a group in response to the books. Usually this point in the workshop is where students would choose a social issue or concern to explore in the sociodrama (Riley, 1990). Due to the age and abilities of the Senior Kindergarten students, Mrs. Brown and I decided that for the majority of the sociodrama workshops relevant themes for students would be presented in the form of common picture books used in a kindergarten program. Eckloff (2006) recommends using familiar pictures or picture books as a starting point for sociodrama with young children. Mrs. Brown and I discussed the books and skeletal workshop plans ahead of time. The particular themes explored in the books included sharing, fighting, turn-taking, being misunderstood, feelings of anger or sadness, clumsiness, and wanting to run away. Mrs. Brown, who felt that these issues were common to her students and something many of them may be experiencing in their

personal lives, recommended these themes to me. According to Zachariah and Moreno (2006) when young children first engage in sociodramatic activities, using storybooks or pictures as prompts for beginning discussion or dramatic exploration of an issue or concern is an appropriate strategy. Mrs. Brown commented on the use of storybooks as a sociodramatic prompt in the second interview.

The books were fabulous! The workshops always started off with a warm-up which set the tone for relaxation and fun and got the children's attention right away. The second step was the picture books and the children were already interested, therefore, they were listening and participating so well. The stories were all relevant to the topic and provided characters and authors the children knew. The stories were a wonderful way to help the children relate and discuss the problems in each story and come up with solutions to some of the problems.

Mrs. Brown indicated in her first interview that her students had very little organized dramatic experience prior to this study. Very few dramatic activities had been conducted during circle time lessons, and students who did participate in the dramatic arts center in the classroom had free choice in their activities. Due to the fact that these students were now in their second year with the same classroom teacher, it can be assumed that they also had very little exposure to and experience with dramatic arts at school, especially role-playing and improvisation in their junior kindergarten year. Mrs. Brown revealed in the second interview that she had "never used this type of teaching in [her] class". When one considers the limited amount of time students spent engaging in dramatic arts prior to this study, it is amazing to see the difference in students' level of involvement in the scenes, ability to portray effective characterization using gestures,

props and dialogue in role, and willingness to participate. They grew greatly as artists by the conclusion of the study.

At the commencement of the twelve workshops, students were prompted and encouraged by their teacher at every step of their involvement in the drama. Ideas about what to explore in the sociodramas were suggested through communal reading and exploration of storybooks, while isolating social issues and concerns was accomplished through much closed questioning (for example lots of yes and no comprehension questions to ensure students understood the events, characters and setting of the book), and the acting within scenes was mechanical and prescribed by the teacher. Observed moments from the dramas and reflexive journal entries reveal that the students' first few attempts at sociodrama "were painful to watch" (reflexive journal, p. 5) as the voluntary actors exploring the initial ideas required step-by-step instructions and encouragement from the teacher to complete any action or line of dialogue. The teacher had to direct each student in every thing they said and did in role. Often students would act in a role that they volunteered for, only to realize at the end of the scene that the role they acted was different than what they wanted, as in Dana's experience in workshop two. This confusion and disorganization hindered the spontaneity of the sociodramas and prevented students from claiming the scenes as their own. With the teacher selecting books/topics and leading group discussions, selecting students as actors, and directing every element of the sociodramas, one could hardly claim that the experiences students were having in the first few workshops were truly reflective of their own social issues and concerns.

This constant direction from the teacher continued through workshops three, four and five where students who volunteered to act would begin each scene starring blankly

at their teacher and the spectators on the carpet until the teacher would relieve them by reminding them of the issues explored in the storybook and discussion and suggesting actions and words for each student to portray. Some students, like Raja in workshop number three, were unable to speak as their character even with continual prompting and encouragement from the teacher. Others, like Inga in workshop number three asked for the scene's main ideas to be repeated a number of times before attempting to act in character. Some students were able to move as their characters (for example Hassan, Farhani, Amar) but unable to dialogue with each other in role. Reflexive journal entries indicate that this constant interrupting of the scene by the students asking (verbally and nonverbally) for assistance, as well as the teacher providing step-by-step instructions for movement and dialogue was both frustrating for everyone involved in the workshops and not reflective of the improvised nature of sociodrama (p. 8, 10-12). With each interruption audible groans and sighs would escape some students' mouths as they waited for the drama to continue.

A transformation began to occur within the students in workshops five and six. Although much prompting and encouragement from the teacher was still needed, especially at the beginning of scenes, students were beginning to initiate some of the dramatic action. The second interview Mrs. Brown states:

I found that I was prompting and cueing in a nonjudgmental way a lot in the beginning and made an effort after the first few lessons to not help them as much. I believe that when children are learning something new they need adult support in the beginning. Once they get the hang of what we are doing I like to step back and let them take the lead.

Raja initiated gathering props that would enhance her characterization of the issue and others follow suit by using the same props in their scenes. Students were now miming the actions that accompanied the dialogue they were saying (as suggested by the teacher) resulting in more student-initiated characterization. Some students, such as Farhani and Naresh began to prompt others in their dialogue and actions. Reflexive journal entries for these workshops indicate that the teacher was becoming aware of the student risk-taking in the sociodramas and was attempting to encourage this spontaneity. The teacher suggested that students consider acting out the solutions immediately following scenes of concern. This resulted in students sharing current, relevant issues for exploration such as Amar's struggle to have his family members help him in his quest to find batteries for a special toy in workshop six. Student confidence and artist ability appeared to be heightening the workshop experience for many students.

The student-initiated actions continued through workshop six and beyond. Although the teacher was still prompting and encouraging from the audience, many students such as Farhani, Inga, Raja, Naresh and Dana were no longer requiring step-by-step directions for their involvement in the sociodramas or for how to incorporate their props into their characterization. Farhani was able to suggest the first scene the class should explore through the drama, and not the teacher. He yelled the word 'action' as a spectator to help the action begin. Other students such as Raja and Dana worked alongside students, prompting them from within the scene instead of relying on the teacher for support. Naresh experimented with some improvisation in his conflict scene with Farhani and students such as Dana and Farhani were able to replace a student in the scene in character in order to present an alternative action or resolution to the conflict

being explored – something up until this point that the students were unable to do. This became a pivotal moment for the success of the students within the sociodrama. Journal entries reveal, “Students are finally engaged in true sociodrama, replacing one another as they explore issues and find answers to their problems” (reflexive journal, p.16). The teacher directed the dramatic action less as more students began to function as both actors and explorers within the sociodrama scenes, acting in character but also stepping out in order to help prompt a fellow actor in his or her dialogue or actions, or to suggest alternative actions for the characters within the scene. Field notes reveal that certain students, especially Raja, Inga, Farhani and Naresh were actively supporting other students within the drama work, encouraging them in their actions and providing suggestions in order to further the scene when needed (reflexive journal, p.22). The transformation in students’ abilities to dramatize a character, improvise, and work together towards finding alternative responses to the conflicts being explored in sociodramas was amazing. Students such as Farhani, Raja, Inga and Naresh were able to use gestures, tone of voice, props, and improvisation to explore different characters and their interactions with each other within a specific context (for example Max and Ruby’s relationship in workshop eleven).

Towards the conclusion of the workshops, students actively suggested situations to explore immediately within the sociodrama activities (for example Inga’s struggle with her dad and Madalynn’s fight with her sister in workshop twelve); situations of importance that were occurring immediately in these students’ lives and were of concern to them, as indicated by Madalynn in discussion (“That problem happened yesterday and I keep thinking about it,” she explained to the teacher in workshop twelve.). Students also

suggested ways for the artistic exploration to be extended into the rest of the classroom. In workshop nine students requested that the book *Corduroy* (Freeman, 1968) and the stuffed Corduroy bear be placed in the reading center so students could continue to use these materials during their activity time. At the conclusion of workshops seven, eight and nine students created a bulletin board display in the hallway outside their classroom to showcase their dramatic work and responses to the *Corduroy* (Freeman, 1968) book and their explorations of how they feel and respond when they lose something of importance, or when they can't have something they want. Journal entries revealed that by the final few workshops, students appeared to have become risk-takers and problem solvers within and beyond the workshops. They were beginning to own their sociodramatic experiences (reflexive journal, p. 31, 34, 41).

Discussion and Reflection

The final component of successful sociodrama was the gathering of the group of students to reflect upon and discuss the events that have occurred throughout the workshop thus far. At the beginning of the workshops, little discussion, if any occurred at the conclusion of the warm-ups and main sociodramatic activities. Field notes and transcripts of the workshop sessions reveal that the teacher always provided some opportunity for students to share their ideas, but few students actually did. Beginning in workshop five students began to share brief comments regarding their experiences working within the warm-up activities or sociodrama scenes. Farhani, Inga, Raja and Naresh shared their ideas regarding how it felt to act as their characters in the different scenes. By workshops six and seven, students were still contributing to group discussion at the conclusion of the activities, but now the comments reflect a deeper exploration or

understanding of the sociodramatic process. Farhani and Madalynn engaged in a brief conversation regarding how it felt for them to role-play a character of the opposite gender. The discussion evolved so students began discussing their involvement as different characters in the sociodramas. In the final workshop students reflected upon how they might be able to extend the situations and interactions they have explored in the sociodramas into their own lives next time they had a problem. Although not every student was a participant in the group discussions, the essence of the discussion evolved from simply analyzing what was explored in the sociodramas to how students might be able to resolve future issues and conflicts.

Through an in-depth examination of multiple sociodramatic experiences and moments from the drama that occurred during the twelve workshops, it was apparent that the Senior Kindergarten students were able to interact successfully within the sociodrama activities and developed as actors by the end of the study. By the twelfth workshop students appeared able to discuss issues of personal importance within the group format, to improvise a role-playing of the selected scene, and to brainstorm and role-play alternative responses or solutions to the initial problem. Students demonstrated these abilities repeatedly in moments observed within the workshops, as represented by the transcripts of each session in chapter four and began to extend these artistic interactions into their free playtime outside of the sociodramatic workshops. Although students in the class involved themselves in varied ways for the different components of the workshops (for example warm-ups, discussions, sociodramas) each was involved in their own unique way. According to Taussig and Scechner (1994):

All the participants in a forum workshop learn something, become more aware

of some problems that they did not consider before, because a standard model is challenged and the idea that there are alternatives is clearly demonstrated. We never try to find which solution proposed is the 'correct' one. (p.28-29)

Difficulties Implementing Sociodrama with Young Children

As demonstrated in the above discussion which outlines the progression of the students abilities, participation and commitment to the sociodramatic workshops (for example warm-up, sociodramatic activities, discussion) one can see that although sociodrama is meant to be created, experienced and reflected upon by the collective group of participants, this was normally not the case with the Senior Kindergarten class. The workshops were mainly teacher-directed, especially in the first half of the study. Although workshops were designed in sets of three so that the social issues being presented in each picture book would lead students into exploring personal issues (for example the book was presented, the issues in the book were explored, and then students were encouraged to think of individual problems or concerns that they could share with the group) quite often students chose to focus on the issues presented in the picture books even when their teacher prompted them to contribute their own unique experiences and concerns. Perhaps students were not yet comfortable enough within the drama activities to freely explore any ideas of their choice, as their experiences with drama in the classroom were limited prior to this workshop. A certain set of drama skills is an asset for participants exploring sociodrama including an understanding of what a character is, how to improvise dialogue between characters, how to utilize the body (for example gestures, facial expressions, leveling and positioning the body in scenes), and how to portray emotions using tone of voice and body language. If students did not fully understand or

feel comfortable using these drama tools, it appears reasonable to assume that sociodrama workshops towards the beginning of the study would be more teacher-directed as students became familiar with and practiced using these basic dramatic elements.

In addition to requiring some background experience in dramatic arts, students participating in sociodramatic activities also need some sort of common theme, element or issue in order to fully participate in a true sociodramatic process. Originally designed for use with government-oppressed people in Brazil (Boal, 1985, 2002) participants in original sociodrama works may have been a more homogenous group of which the majority had some major life oppressions that brought them all together. As demonstrated in the participant description, students in this study came from a very diverse ethnic and cultural background. Is it harder for people of very different backgrounds to find common interests or concerns to collectively explore than a homogeneous group of people? This student diversity may have also impacted the students' ability to move beyond the teacher-directed, picture book inspired issues in the sociodrama.

Teacher's role goes beyond that of the "Joker"

In Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (1985, 2002), a central figure in successful sociodrama activities is the "joker" (Boal, 2002, p.260) who acts as a neutral participant facilitating the dramatic actions. The joker's role is to initiate a fair proceeding of the sociodrama, ensuring that those participants who wish to express their opinions in role as spectator or experiment as actor get a fair chance to do so. In Theatre of the Oppressed, the role of joker is nonbiased, and those who act as jokers do not comment or intervene in the sociodramatic process or action. The joker avoids manipulating or influencing the dramatic action and personally does not decide which resolution to a conflict is the best

or most effective choice, but is responsible for helping participants to “gather their thoughts, to prepare their actions” (Boal, 2002, p. 262).

Throughout the twelve workshops it was observed through field notes and reflexive journals that the teacher leading the sociodrama workshops embodied the role of the joker helping facilitate the workshops and attempting to gather student ideas and prepare them for involvement. However, it appeared difficult for Mrs. Brown to remain unbiased and neutral, as she often needed to step beyond the role of joker and into her established (self-conceived) role as ‘teacher’ in the classroom. Often she would need to redirect certain students such as Ian and Matthew, based on her established expectations for behaviour in the classroom and she would frequently and spontaneously offer encouragement and positive praise for participation and improvisation in the sociodrama. Although a joker’s role traditionally is that of preparer of participants, any form of manipulation, either through suggestions, constructive criticisms, or praise may be seen as influences upon the dramatic work, perhaps directly or indirectly affecting the way participants engage within the sociodrama and amongst each other.

One of the most common forms of feedback that Mrs. Brown would provide to students was encouragement for their involvement in the drama activities in the form of praise. Field notes reveal that in every workshop Mrs. Brown repeatedly responded to student participation in warm-ups, main sociodramatic activities and discussions with positive comments such as “very good,” “good idea,” “nice job,” “that’s a good one,” “that’s great,” “good memory,” “right,” “that was wonderful,” “wow,” “those were two great ideas,” “nice sharing,” and “yes”. Did these positive comments act as extrinsic motivation for students, encouraging them to act certain ways within the drama in order

to please their teacher? Or perhaps the teacher's comments limited the possibilities of the drama because students may have been replicating ideas from previous activities in order to have a teacher repeat the praise a student associated with a specific activity. Feldman (2003) posits that a teacher's praise can have both positive and negative impacts on students. When used selectively, praise can increase student self-esteem and encourage more positive interactions in the classroom. However, the more students are rewarded for simple tasks and activities in the classroom, the more meaningless the praise is for students. Regardless of how often or how a teacher praises students in his or her classroom, Feldman assures that few students are motivated enough to work or behave differently in the classroom in exchange for an increase in praise from their teacher.

Moments of Empathy and Care Within the Sociodramas

Mrs. Brown was not the only person providing praise throughout the drama activities. Towards the midpoint in the twelve workshops some students were observed to be providing some praise to their peers in response to drama activities. In workshop five Ian praised Farhani by clapping his hands and saying, "Yes, yes! You got it!" when Farhani guessed what animal Ian was trying to act as. In the same workshop Dana was observed saying "Nice actors, nice actors" to students at the conclusion of every sociodrama scene. It was also this same workshop that students began to clap spontaneously for their acting peers at the conclusion of every sociodrama scene without Mrs. Brown suggesting or encouraging this response. This peer encouragement continued into workshop seven where students who worked together in pairs during the warm-up activity were observed to be very cooperative and supportive of one another. Reflexive journal notes revealed that, "Students appear to be encouraging one another in the warm-

up activity by nodding their heads yes, smiling, and laughing in their work together” (p.20). Once again in workshop seven students were observed to be providing both verbal and non-verbal support and encouragement to one another. Madalynn and Raja worked together as a team during the warm-up activity. When Madalynn could not guess what Raja had changed about her appearance, Raja provided encouragement for Madalynn by smiling, nodding her head, gesturing and providing clues. Instead of tricking Madalynn or allowing her to be unsuccessful in the activity, Raja helped support and encourage her until she correctly identified what Raja had changed. This encouragement among students continued until the conclusion of the study. In workshop eight students marveled at Ian’s advanced participation in the warm-up activity and in workshop nine, Dana was provided much suggestion and encouragement by her peers when she was unsure of what to do and say in role as her character. Student encouragement and praise for peers was noted repeatedly in field notes and commented upon in reflexive journals.

Perhaps an eventual resolution to the influence a teacher might have on the sociodramatic activities when in role as joker or other roles would be to instead have students take turns acting in role as joker. In the previously listed examples of student encouragement for peers, many demonstrated the ability to help lead and support others in the dramatic activities. One way of removing some of the influence the teacher may have been exerting on participants would be to have students initiate the sociodrama by taking turns in role of the joker. This way multiple jokers would be leading the sociodramas, resulting in different experiences each time. If each sociodrama were lead by a different joker, the influence upon and praise for specific actors and scenarios would be limited or altered with each new facilitator. In order for this to occur, students would

need to have much more exposure to the sociodramatic process and be comfortable enough within the activities to take on such a leadership role. Perhaps if a class engaged in sociodrama throughout the school year instead of concentrated blocks of time as experienced in this study, students could experiment working within the joker role.

Classroom Structure

Although student involvement in and commitment to the sociodrama appeared to increase with each successive workshop, many extrinsic influences may have affected the way students experienced the activities. The physical environment of the classroom, established expectations for student behaviour and participation, and outside interruptions all may have influenced the way students interacted within each workshop.

Before students can fully engage within the educational process, including participation in the arts, the most basic of their needs must be met (Maslow, 1968). Students must feel safe and secure in the classroom before advanced learning and engagement can take place. This safe space is also essential for active and meaningful participation in drama (Way, 1967; Warren, 1993). Participants should feel that they are able to take risks in their personal exploration, and that they are free from personal shame, embarrassment or vulnerability. During each drama workshop every effort was made to ensure the classroom environment was both supportive and physically and psychologically safe for the students. Taylor (1994) suggests that students need to feel comfortable in their immediate environment in order to participate successfully in drama. Way (1967) defines a safe drama space as a physically inviting and warm environment large enough to allow students free movement in activities. This “infinite space” (Boal, 2002, p.162) that is full of possibility, should be secluded from the rest of the school, so

that outsiders cannot influence the drama or cause anxiety in student performers. This safe environment encourages a level of comfort and trust within the students so that they can freely explore issues, feelings, and unfamiliar situations (Blum, 1999; Pecaski McLennan & Smith, 2007; Way, 1967).

In addition to a safe and supportive physical environment that provides time for drama to evolve without external interruptions, students experiencing the full possibilities of sociodrama need to engage with each other and interact within a psychologically supportive environment. In this space each student's ideas are valued and the sociodrama facilitator is willing and able to implement all suggestions, allowing the direction of the activities to ebb and flow with the needs and desires of the participants. The context within which the sociodrama occurs plays a critical role in facilitating and constraining the sociodrama. A sociodrama facilitator, also known as the "joker" (Boal, 2002, p.260) has the ability to heighten the sociodramatic experience for students by providing multiple opportunities for a variety of student suggestions to occur. The facilitator must follow the direction of the exploration as set forth by the participants within the dramatic exploration.

Crowded Environment

Although the Senior Kindergarten classroom was warm and bright, it was a rather small environment, overflowing with shelves, tables and chairs, and bins of learning materials. Every wall displayed colorful posters, artwork and schedules. Students participated in the workshops by using the large communal carpet that was adjacent to the wall. There was no other open space in the classroom large enough to permit small groups of students the room they might need to experience open and large movements.

During warm-up activities that required students to move around the room, movement was limited to walking around tables and chairs and often students would bump into one another or need to pause and wait for another student to move out of the way. During sociodrama scenes, spectactors would remain seated on the carpet and the actors would stand in front of them, cramped in the border between the carpet and the tables and chairs. This small space may have hindered some of the possibilities for movements that students potentially might have engaged in had they more room to move in character. The purpose for remaining in the classroom was for students to experience the new sociodramatic activities in a safe and familiar space, without outside influences affecting their level of comfort or involvement. Perhaps staging the workshops in a larger space such as the school library or gym might have encouraged different movements or levels of participation in some of the more active warm-ups and sociodrama scenes.

Established Classroom Rules and Routines

de Cosson, Irwin, Grauer, and Wilson (2003) metaphorically describe the rigid, invisible expectations in place in schools that limit the range of student expression and experience in the arts. A bulletin board, meant to display student created artwork, showcases the hidden power structures in the classroom and how even in activities such as visual art where students can create unique pieces of art, the underlying expectations and rules of the teacher can hinder free expression and spontaneity.

The space right outside the classroom in essence belongs to the teacher inside.

Every bulletin board unique yet similar. The latest art show, writing exercise, class project, oh so carefully displayed for fellow teachers to compliment us on our fine and sometimes Herculean efforts at presentation. We arrange according to our own

aesthetic. We hope our colleagues recognize our great work. We expect the complimentary staff room comments. "Oh what a great project you got your kids to do, it looks wonderful!" Everything straight, arranged to an exact grid, very seldom is the colouring allowed outside the lines. Do we ever consider our children's aesthetics as we paste and staple those masterpieces? Do we realize how conforming this structure is and how defined the silent expectations are? (p.11-12)

Like the bulletin board's structure that silently oppresses student aesthetic experience, the physical environment of this study with its established classroom rules and procedures may have also impacted the level of student spontaneity and engagement within the sociodrama work. In this classroom students were expected to raise their hand and be called upon by Mrs. Brown before speaking, to sit cross-legged on the carpet when attending to another, to not call out ideas spontaneously, to take turns with one another, and to always be attending to whatever was happening at the particular 'teaching' moment. Often when a student was not following the established classroom rules and routines, the teacher would redirect their attention or address the behaviour by calling the student's name, stopping and waiting for the student's attention, ask a student to move to and sit in another area of the carpet, and in extreme circumstances, ask a student to remove him or herself completely from the carpet and sit in a chair. These behaviour modifications and redirections were observed in every workshop, in particular, to address behaviour demonstrated by both Ian and Matthew. Often the teacher's verbal redirection would interrupt an already in-progress activity, causing the students who were participating to stop their action and wait for the redirection before resuming their

activity. The teacher described her personal philosophy towards classroom management in the first interview:

I believe that teachers should adopt a teaching style that is positive, encouraging and kind. I feel in order for a child to learn, they need a place that feels safe and secure and free to take risks. They need a place where they are encouraged to explore and learn at their own pace. Teachers need to establish a consistent classroom routine. As well it is essential that rules are established, and students know what is expected of them.

Although the teacher encouraged students to take risks and use their creativity in the workshops, the highly structured rules of the classroom (for example raising hands before answering questions, speaking one at a time, sitting in a circle formation) may have discouraged spontaneity in student actions or verbalizations. As a result the sociodramatic process, which encourages a continuous stream of dialogue to exist between actors portraying a scene, and spectators critiquing and suggesting changes from an audience's perspective may have been repressed. One of the key elements of successful sociodrama is a participant's ability to engage spontaneously within the drama (Zachariah & Moreno, 2006). Students who are required to raise their hand before suggesting an idea or replacing an actor in a sociodrama scene may not have their idea accepted as quickly or may be repressed by the process.

Time Constraints

In addition to internal circumstances such as classroom environment and routines and procedures, many external influences may have potentially affected student participation in the workshop activities. On many occasions the workshops were either

interrupted by activities occurring outside the classroom, or had to end early due to scheduling issues. Workshops two, three, and eleven ended before students had completed the entire workshop. Students followed a strict schedule derived from a specific number of instructional minutes being committed to specific activities. At a certain time students needed to end their lesson in their classroom and proceed to the music room for music class. These three workshops were ended before students indicated they had completed the activities because of the need for the schedule to be adhered to. Workshop eight needed to end early as well because it was picture day for the school and they were directed to proceed to the gymnasium to have their pictures taken before the workshop had ended. Because the entire school needed to have pictures taken and these students were only at school for the morning on this day, we needed to end our workshop. On two other occasions students had to pause their sociodrama work to accommodate other events occurring in the school. During workshop five the workshop was interrupted by a very lengthy p.a. system announcement relevant only for the grades three and four classes regarding a field trip they were taking that day. The expectation in this school is that when an announcement comes on, all activity in the classroom halts and students give their full attention. It is for this reason that sociodrama work paused until the completion of the announcement. In workshop eleven the sociodrama again had to be halted because two Grade Eight students were sent to the classroom to take a picture of students for the Grade Eight yearbook. In total, six of the twelve workshops had some form of early conclusion or interruption of the activities due to external influence beyond the control of the students or teacher. According to Willerman (1975) even minimal classroom interruptions have a negative effect on students' attention and engagement

within the classroom. One has to wonder had these disruptions (regardless of how minimal they may appear) not have occurred, would the workshops have proceeded differently. Teacher interviews revealed that lessons often ended prior to students appearing ready for them to end:

The children enjoyed the drama so much they often wanted to continue even after the lesson was complete. As I had mentioned before the children loved the workshops and often wanted to continue later on in the day. More than once they asked if the books we were using could be placed in the book center during center time for them to act out the scenarios on their own. (interview two)

Amatruda (2006) posits that it is often very challenging to incorporate sociodramatic activities into school environments due to the “complex and limiting” (p.168) interpersonal and institutional issues and structures.

Consistently Finding Solutions within the Sociodrama

Despite having a number of outside influences and disruptions within the sociodrama workshops, most students were able to participate actively as actors and spectators within the warm-ups and activities. The main goal of the sociodrama in this study was for students to work together within the activities in order to find alternative responses or resolutions to the situations being explored. At first the social issues students were focusing on were derived from children’s picture books. According to interviews with the classroom teacher “the stories were relevant to the topic and provided characters and authors the children knew. The stories were a wonderful way to help the children relate and discuss the problems in each story and come up with solutions to some of the problems” (second interview). Eventually students used these picture books as a way to

brainstorm personal issues and concerns they were immediately experiencing in their personal lives and wanted to explore in the drama. Using the sociodramatic structure to “[put] a conflict into action [allowed] students the opportunity to act out the dilemma and gain insight into various possible constructive solutions” (Zachariah & Moreno, 2006, p.158). Although students initially needed storybooks to help them suggest social issues to engage within the dramatic activities, they consistently were able to brainstorm multiple solutions or alternative actions for the problems they encountered. This was evident in every single sociodramatic activity explored by students.

Beginning in the first few workshops, students worked together to brainstorm multiple alternative behaviours by characters within a sociodramatic scene in order to provide an alternative response or conclusion to the issue. At first students contributed these ideas in a brief discussion format and they were then acted out by volunteers in a scene. The resolutions were not spontaneously called out during the drama action as in traditional sociodrama. Rather, the conflicts were first portrayed by volunteer actors who then incorporated suggestions for resolutions in a second scene. Boal (2002) reminds us that solutions presented and portrayed in sociodramatic work, although perhaps appropriate for the person who suggested them, are “not necessarily useful or applicable for all the participants in the forum” (p.259). It is interesting to note that on many occasions students were able to suggest multiple personal responses to the conflict issues, not just one or two. Also, it appeared that students would build upon other suggestions provided, resulting in solutions evolving into more complex responses. For example, in workshop three a scene regarding a problem sharing toys was suggested by Hassan. When asked to consider responses to the problem original suggestions of Nichole’s “we

could take turns” transformed into Raja’s suggestion of “one person can play with the toy and another person can play with another toy and then they can put a time thingy and then when a sound comes out of it, when the bell rings, then they need to switch toys and the next person could have a turn.”

This transformation of suggestions occurred again in workshops seven and eight where students were able to suggest increasingly complex solutions or alternative behaviours for the characters to deal with their problems. When exploring how Corduroy the bear might have been able to prevent losing one of the buttons on his overalls, students suggestions from Naresh’s “He could have tied his button on very carefully,” evolved into Raja’s “When that one was tighter he could have seen that the other one was looser and he could have asked for it to be tighter or been more careful with it.” Suggestions for change were never repeated within an activity and each provided by students were unique. This change in thinking about the issues being explored implied that students were continually thinking about and considering different ways for the solution to be eventually resolved or prevented. According to Boal (2002) the purpose of interactive theatre such as sociodrama is “to encourage autonomous activity, to set a process in motion, to stimulate transformative creativity, to change spectators into protagonists” (p.275). This process was evident in the Senior Kindergarten students’ involvement in the drama as reflected by their continual journey to suggest different alternative responses to the issues being explored in the sociodrama. The teacher reflected upon this student involvement in a response during the second interview:

I was not surprised by the students’ involvement. It was simply interesting to me that the children who often struggle in academics and comprehension were the

first ones to participate and did a wonderful job. It made me realize that some children may need a drama opportunity to act out problems to social dilemmas they may be encountering. Not all children are able to draw a picture and use words to help communicate what they are feeling, but, instead a simple skit could help.

Although the students' abilities to succeed within the technical structure of the sociodramatic artwork (for example positioning, levels, gestures and body movement) is of some interest and importance, especially considering the lack of knowledge and experience within the dramatic art form that students had, what is more important is the discovery and connection students appeared to experience beginning in the sixth and continuing until the concluding workshop. Students became more fluid in their dialogue and actions. They worked together to create more complex characters and explorations of the issues being examined in the sociodramas. Student responses to the conflicts became more complex as they worked together to create more informed, intricate responses to their problems. For example, when students explored difficulties sharing toys within the classroom their responses evolved from getting the teacher to help into using a timer to distribute the time spent playing with a toy evenly amongst students. Unlike oral or written problem-solving and discussion (for example reading a book about a problem and then discussing it, watching a film about successful problem-solving) it is this transformative experience of living within the sociodrama, and not just focusing on the technical aspects of the craft, that appear to be most transformative for students (Wilson, 2004). By inquiring within the connected roles, relationships and issues existing as the

'sociodrama' that students can freely explore, risk-take, re-try, re-invent, discover, and solve their social concerns. Learning becomes three-dimensional.

Student Participation and Commitment to the Sociodrama

When reviewing moments observed within the sociodrama activities, reflexive journals and interviews, it appears the level of participation by the Senior Kindergarten students can be categorized into four groups: students who had increased participation and commitment to the drama, students who had no change in their participation and commitment to the drama, students who had increased, then decreased participation and commitment to the drama, and students who had decreased participation and commitment to the drama by the twelfth workshop. During the second interview Mrs. Brown discussed the different levels of students participation and commitment in the workshops:

I loved every minute of the drama workshops. [This type of teaching] allowed me to see the different comfort levels of each student during the drama sessions. Some children were eager to participate at the beginning and others needed time to observe before taking a chance and trying the activities. They were very committed and stayed on task throughout the entire lesson. As I had mentioned before some children were very eager to participate in the beginning without even knowing what we were going to do. Other children were not as eager, however, after they saw what their peers were doing they all wanted to take part. I had one student, Nichole that did not participate in any of the dramas.

When examining the participation and commitment of all students, it is interesting to note that with the exception of the "decreased participation and commitment" category, the number of males and females in each group are almost equal. For the purposes of this

study student participation and commitment are defined as students who actively participated in all aspects of the workshops including warm-ups, sociodrama activities, discussion and reflection periods as either actors or spectactors.

Increased Participation

Farhani, Inga, Madalynn, Naresh, and Raja were all students who appeared to have increased participation and commitment to the sociodrama by the twelfth workshop. Some of these students, such as Farhani, Inga and Raja were enthusiastic risk-takers, ready to try anything right from the very beginning of the workshops. Although at times each needed some support or prompting from their teacher, they were active and eager to participate, volunteering often to act in scenes or share their ideas. As the workshops progressed, it was observed that each of these students' involvement and roles within the workshops were transforming. Farhani began to assume more of a leadership role by the sixth workshop, often helping to demonstrate activities, volunteering to try new things first, and providing support and encouragement to his peers within shared scenes. Inga was consistently active in her work, but around the eighth workshop blossomed in the ways she interacted within the sociodrama. She shared many of her ideas and acted within original and resolution scenes. For the final workshop, she suggested a problem that she had recently experienced and asked that she be allowed to remain as a spectactor so she could observe how others solved the problem. Raja expressed interest from the beginning in participating in the activities even though she often required support and ideas from her teacher. With each successive workshop, Raja's level of confidence and interaction with others within her sociodrama scenes increased dramatically. She began to incorporate props, miming, and brief improvisation into her characterization of different

roles. Farhani, Inga and Raja were all involved students whose risk-taking, leadership ability, and changes in self-expression transformed by the conclusion of the study.

Much like Farhani, Inga and Raja, Madalynn and Naresh also were observed to have an increase in their level of participation and commitment to the drama by the twelfth workshop. The difference between these students, however, is that Madalynn and Naresh were both observed to be highly shy and reluctant participants in the first few sessions. As the workshops progressed, each of these students appeared to become very interested in exploring many activities. Beginning in workshop three, Madalynn was observed to become more active within the drama. She volunteered to participate more frequently than the first sessions, and started to experiment within the sociodrama, often exploring characters that differed from her in age or gender. By the middle of the workshops she was suggesting issues and scenes that she wanted to explore in role. With her increased confidence and ability within the sociodrama, Madalynn began to suggest alternative actions for the scenes and help act these out. She repeatedly was observed to be sharing her ideas in discussion and reflection periods.

Like Madalynn, Naresh was observed to be a very shy and reluctant participant in the workshops at the beginning. He was very quiet and kept to himself on the carpet, often avoiding eye contact with me as I observed the students' drama work. He infrequently answered questions or participated in the sociodramas. A change in his involvement was noted in reflexive journal entry number seven, when it appeared that Naresh was beginning to act more confident in his abilities within the sessions. His eye contact with others, the quality of his discussion, and the occasional times he volunteered to act in drama scenes noted his increasing interest. Although even by the conclusion of

the workshops Naresh appeared more comfortable working within whole group activities as opposed to small group sociodramas, he participated as one of the most active students in discussion and reflection periods. In workshops eleven and twelve, Naresh answered the teacher's questions and shared his ideas more than any other student.

Farhani, Inga, Raja, Madalynn, and Naresh were all students whose participation and commitment to the drama as both actors and spectators increased greatly by the conclusion of the twelfth workshop. Perhaps as their knowledge of and experience with the dramatic elements (for example role-playing, improvising dialogue, using props) became greater, their level of confidence and willingness to take risks increased. As students participated more frequently in dramatic activities, the more committed to the dramatic activities participants became (Nelson, 1993). Through their involvement within the drama workshops, students built self-esteem and self-discipline, resulting in better decision making and problem-solving (Garcia, 1993). Surprisingly, interviews with the classroom teacher revealed that the students whose participation increased the most were "the children who often struggled in academics and comprehension activities" (interview number two).

No Change in Participation

Two students, Amar and Nichole, had no change noted in their level of participation and commitment to the drama by the conclusion of the workshops. Interestingly, Amar was a very active participant in many aspects of the workshops while Nichole was a very removed and uninvolved participant, frequently missing workshops due to her absence from school.

From the beginning of the study Amar was noted to be a very active participant in every part of the workshops. He appeared to participate wholeheartedly in warm-up activities, often laughing and whispering with his peers as they tried to outdo each other in their creative movements. He often shared his ideas for sociodrama scenes, acting within these scenes and suggesting resolutions to help provide some sort of change or ending. He never appeared shy, occasionally attempting to have his ideas explored in the activities before it was time for another idea as in workshop three. Amar remained one of the most active and interested male participants until the conclusion of the workshops, but no real increase was noted in his involvement.

Like Amar, Nichole had no noted change in her involvement in the workshops. Absent for four of the workshops, Nichole was the only member of the class who did not participate actively in the sociodrama sessions. She participated in the whole group warm-ups, but never in the sociodrama scenes and discussions, choosing instead to act in role of observer, watching instead of participating. Nichole was invited several times by her teacher to participate in the activities, but always declined. McCaslin (2000) states that even as spectators, people observing dramatic activity are still compelled to think and feel more deeply about issues being addressed within the dramatic framework. Although passive, perhaps Nichole was examining her own thoughts and feelings regarding the problems being explored by her peers.

Increased, then Decreased Participation

Two students, Dana and Hassan were both observed to have an increase, and then decrease in participation by the middle of the workshops. Each began the workshops passive and quiet, reluctantly participating in the warm-up activities. Beginning in

workshop two Dana began to volunteer to participate in the sociodrama, often requiring her teacher's verbal instructions and encouragement in order to act within a scene. Reflexive journal entries discuss workshop five becoming a pivotal event for Dana. In this workshop she became very active and engaged within each of the activities. She volunteered frequently to participate in the workshops and sociodramas, she required less assistance from her teacher or peers in order to portray a character and event, and she physically expressed her interest in the events by sitting close to where the drama was occurring (instead of her usual spot at the back of the carpet) and by making eye contact and laughing and smiling with her peers. Despite the progress Dana was making, suddenly in workshop seven Dana appeared to lose interest and never regained the focus she had earlier experienced within the activities. Her absence in workshop eight seemed to permanently instill a sense of disinterest and lack of involvement for Dana in the activities. From this point forward she did not participate in the drama activities, rarely participated in group discussion, and withdrew herself to her usual space on the carpet where she appeared to spend much of workshop twelve staring across the room.

Like Dana, Hassan began the twelve workshops a quiet and shy participant, rarely participating in activities without prompting from his teacher. At times some of his negative behaviour required him to be addressed by his teacher. Reflexive journal entries however indicate that workshops two and three became transformative for Hassan. Here, he changed from one of the most passive and shy participants to one of the most active male participants in the session, working cooperatively with his peers in the drama scenes, suggesting ideas for them to say and do when they are not sure of how to proceed in the scene. Hassan's progress surprisingly changed in workshop four when he began

crying at the beginning of the workshop without explanation or observable cause. He requested to spend the majority of this workshop seated by me. Then again in workshops five through eight Hassan's involvement in the activities increased, with him becoming a very active participant within activities and discussions. He expressed great disappointment when the workshop ended early due to an outside disruption.

Unfortunately Hassan's high level of interest and participation did not continue. He was again observed to be a quiet participant from workshop nine until the conclusion of the study. Although he appeared interested in the events occurring in the sociodrama scenes as demonstrated by his head-shaking and nodding in response to what was occurring, he did not participate in any of the main activities or class discussions. Occasionally he would appear to tentatively put his hand up to express his interest in acting or sharing an idea, but would quickly put the hand back down when his teacher's eyes would glance in his direction. He remained a quiet observer at the end of the study.

Decreased Participation

One of the most interesting themes to emerge from examining student experiences within the sociodrama activities was that of students whose participation and commitment to the drama appeared to decrease with each successive workshop. Two students, Ian and Matthew appeared to become uninvolved and disinterested participants by the conclusion of this study, even though each was a moderately involved participant at the commencement of the workshops. Both of these boys were observed to have multiple behavioural problems in the classroom including a lack of respect for their peers and inattention to the classroom activities requiring them to be repeatedly addressed and disciplined by their teacher on numerous occasions.

Ian began the workshops very enthusiastic and involved in the activities. He expressed a great interest in learning about me and frequently volunteered to participate in activities or discussions. In workshop two, Ian began to display some distracting behaviour that often appeared to prevent his participation in the activities. Perhaps he was too distracted to observe in detail or follow along with the events of the workshops. He may also have had difficulty understanding exactly what was occurring in the activities due to his low level of English language comprehension. However, according to Gregoire and Lupinetti (2005) the arts, including drama, are accessible by all including ESL students. Regardless of a student's native language, he or she can participate actively in the arts using their nonverbal and creative capacities (for example creative movement). Dramatic activities often prompt students to use language differently than more traditional classroom subjects such as math and science (Ernst-Slavit & Wenger, 1998).

Ian's increasingly disruptive behaviour often interrupted his peers in their work. Mrs. Brown often needed to stop her leading of the activities in order to redirect Ian's attention and behaviour. From workshop three until eight Ian participated sporadically throughout the activities, often engaging the warm-ups with much teacher prompting and encouragement. He often appeared unsure of how to proceed with a game or sociodrama scene and relied on the direction of others. From workshop nine until the conclusion of the study Ian's behaviour during the activities became greatly distracting to his peers. He was observed to be touching objects and students around him, yelling out at his peers in the middle of their performances, and staring across the room oblivious to the activities occurring in front of him. At one point he was asked to remove himself from the carpet

and sit on a chair. It appears as though Ian never regained the earlier interest he had prior to workshop eight.

Although involved in some activities, Matthew was another student whose participation and commitment levels decreased by the conclusion of the study. In workshops three and four he was observed to be engaging in some of the sociodrama scenes requiring very little teacher support and encouragement. This involvement became short-lived as Matthew's disruptive behaviour quickly escalated in workshops five through twelve, resulting in multiple disruptions to the work of his peers within the sociodrama scenes. Unlike Ian whose behaviour was mainly self-disruptive, Matthew appeared to purposely sabotage the work of others around him, engaging in such behaviours as making noises, touching people, pretending to shoot his peers with his fingers, touching other students, moving into the personal space of others, and ruining the turns of others. Even when it appeared to not be directed at others, Matthew's behaviour was a constant disruption as the teacher had to stop whatever she was doing or saying in order to redirect or reprimand Matthew. By the conclusion of the workshops it was apparent that Matthew was no longer attending to the activities as he was preoccupied with bothering his peers, picking at himself or the carpet, or starrng into space across the room. He withdrew from class activities and discussions. Conversations with his teacher describe Matthew's behaviour as including a lack of focus, respect, and awareness of social boundaries.

Although students such as Dana, Hassan, Ian and Matthew had decreased involvement by the conclusion of the study, rich moments involving each were observed within the sociodramatic work. The decreased level of observed commitment and

participation does not necessarily mean that these students did not receive any benefit or positive experience from their involvement in the drama. Dana spent many workshops engaged actively in social situations with her peers: she laughed and smiled with many of them, participated in the sociodramas alongside them, changed her seated position on the carpet so she was closer to the others, and initiated the class response of clapping for other students when their scene concluded. Hassan, a student who spent much of workshop four crying and removed from the activities, expressed great disappointment when subsequent workshops needed to end early due to outside circumstances. Although Hassan did not participate frequently in the activities, he appeared to be an observant audience member and was upset to have the sociodrama end earlier than scheduled. The highlight of Ian's involvement in the workshops was definitely in workshop six when he volunteered to role-play the part of Amar's mother. This was a role that few girls, and much fewer boys, wanted to portray. Ian, confused about the role he was volunteering for, was not aware that it was a woman he was going to have to portray. However, he immediately engaged in a scene that few students wanted to have a part in and used some improvised dialogue, movement, and body language to help express his character. This turned out to be one of Ian's most involved performances. Although Matthew did not appear to enjoy the drama activities, he seemed to thrive on the visual art component of workshops seven and ten. He spent a great deal of time planning, drawing and explaining his pictures to others. These pictures contained intricate detail, multiple colours, and told a story through the images. He excelled at this task. It was apparent to me when I listened to Matthew explain his drawings that they meant a great deal to him. He was proud of drawing them and wanted to share them with others.

Emerging Leadership Roles

Of the five students whose participation and commitment to the sociodrama appeared to continually increase up to the conclusion of the study, Farhani, Inga, and Raja were also observed to begin acting in leadership roles within the workshops. Each of these students were highly active in all components of the workshops, often self-reliant in participating in sociodramatic activities and discussion with little or no peer or teacher support. Reflexive journal entries and field notes reveal that these students eventually began to exhibit some leadership qualities (for example demonstrating activities, volunteering to have a turn first, encouraging and supporting peers).

A highly active and involved participant right from the beginning of the workshops, Farhani began to emerge as a male leader in workshop four. It was here that he began to encourage his peers and provide verbal support and suggestions for their involvement with the activities. His enthusiasm for and interest in the sociodrama was evident by his disappointment when the workshop ended and his request to participate again in the activities. Farhani's enthusiasm extended into workshop five and six, where he became the most active male participant, participating in almost every activity and discussion. Often he was the first person to attempt an activity, acting as a student demonstrator for his peers. Farhani's visible comfort and enjoyment of the drama activities was observed until the end of the workshops. In sessions seven through twelve, he participated with ease in activities, often smiling and laughing alongside his acting partners. By the conclusion of the study Farhani was engaging in improvisation and using props with ease in the sociodrama scenes. He was one of the few students who demonstrated this increase in dramatic ability.

Like Farhani, Inga was one of the most active female participants in the drama, assuming a leadership role within activities and discussions by the twelfth workshop. An active participant right from the first workshop, Inga required little teacher encouragement or support to engage fully in the dramatic activities and discussions. Beginning as early as workshop two, Inga was observed to be acting as a leader as she encouraged and supported her peers in their abilities within the activities, saying things like “come on, we can do it,” or “that’s right.” Field notes and reflexive journal entries indicated that in workshop five Inga was again observed to be encouraging her peers by saying things like “good job” or providing suggestions for actions within the scenes such as “Maybe you could ask your sister if he could play with the dollhouse”. Continuing her active involvement in workshops eight through eleven, Inga continued to demonstrate leadership abilities by participating actively in activities and discussions, encouraging and prompting her peers verbally and non-verbally (for example smiling, nodding her head yes) in response to their work, and participating actively in group discussions. Reflexive journal entries reveal that Inga’s leadership and involvement in the sociodrama blossomed in workshop twelve (p.38). It’s as though she transformed into a true sociodrama expert in this workshop as she participated as a spectator, suggesting and reflecting upon the actors who portrayed her suggestion and then resolution for a scene.

Raja was another female participant who emerged as a leader in the group by the conclusion of the workshops. She was an active and interested student from the very beginning of the workshops, participating often as the only female in activities and discussions. Occasionally Raja required some teacher suggestions or encouragement for how to act in character within a sociodrama scene, but she never hesitated to volunteer to

participate in the first place even when she needed the support. Workshops five through eight provided Raja with the opportunity to engage in almost every activity, often providing suggestions to or directing others within the scene. At one point Raja became upset because the drama needed to end before she wanted it to. Workshops nine through twelve showcased Raja's increased ability to engage fully within the sociodramatic process either as an actor or audience member. She involved herself in most scenes and discussions, experimenting with different characters and issues. Raja's leadership ability had noticeably developed by the twelfth workshop.

Reoccurring Student Themes in the Sociodrama Activities

Initially student sociodrama activities were influenced by four picture books chosen in consultation with the classroom teacher. Originally activities were derived from the social issues or concerns students inferred from their interpretation of the reading of the picture books. These then transformed into issues or concerns students had experienced in their personal lives that were common to the issues being explored in the books. In the final workshops students were able to volunteer their own suggestions for the sociodramatic exploration. Field notes and reflexive journal entries indicate that students appeared to focus mainly upon issues or problems of a personal, not societal nature. For example, scenarios suggested often involved the participant personally and revolved around intrinsic, self-motivating interests or concerns. The larger societal picture was rarely explored. When examining the diverse issues students wished to explore through the drama, five reoccurring themes were evident including: sharing with others, personal emotions and responses, losing things, feeling misunderstood or not listened to, and not being allowed to do something. Students, whether inspired by a

picture book or personal experience, always provided suggestions for exploration in sociodrama.

Sharing objects with others

Inspired by the book *We Share Everything* (Munsch, 1999) the first theme of exploration in the sociodramas by students was that of sharing objects, particularly those in the classroom (for example paint brushes, books, blocks, toys). In workshops one and two students discovered resolutions for the sharing conflicts of the characters Amanda and Jeremiah. Students especially could relate to the characters, setting, and plot of the story as they took place during the first day of kindergarten. In workshop three students expanded on the concept of sharing by exploring situations where they have had difficulty sharing things with relatives at home. Hassan shared a story where he had difficulty sharing toys with his brother and cousin, resulting in the toy being taken away by his mother and none of the boys having the opportunity to play with it. Raja told the class of a time when her sister received markers as a birthday party favour and refused to share them with her. Raja's mother intervened by forcing the sister to share the markers. The theme of sharing reemerged during workshop twelve when Madalynn wanted to explore the immediate problem of not being able to share a favourite toy at home with her sister. In each of these sharing scenes, students brainstormed alternative ways for the characters to share the items: taking turns using the item in a designated order (for example one person is first, the next is second, etcetera), using a timer to designate turns (for example when the timer rings the toy is passed to the next person), asking a parent or teacher for support in turn-taking, and both students handling the desired object at once

(for example reading the same book together at the same time, building a tower of blocks together).

Exploring personal emotions and responses to situations

Students expressed great interest in discussing personal emotions and responses to specific situations. Inspired by Mayer's (1983) *I Was So Mad*, students explored different feelings and reactions they experienced during specific situations including having something taken away from them (for example a toy or sweater), being misunderstood or not listened to by another person, not being allowed to pursue a certain activity (for example play with animals in the house, stay up late, go to the park), and being blamed for an accident. Each of these situations were first discussed and explored in sociodramas in workshops four, five, and six as responses to the Mayer (1983) book, but also arose in subsequent workshops. In workshop seven students discussed feelings of disappointment and sadness when they lost something of personal importance or when their parents did not purchase something they desire at a store. Feelings of disappointment were explored in workshops ten and eleven in sociodramas that explored students feeling as though they were not being listened to by a parent or not allowed to help out a family member with a special activity. The interest in explore feelings arose again in workshop twelve when students were able to explore any situation they wished. Inga suggested a recent event where she was blamed for something she did not do. Students took a particular interest in exploring both Inga and her dad's responses and roles in this particular situation.

Losing something of importance

Using the book *Corduroy* (Freeman, 1968) as a starting point for discussion, students were eager to discuss how they have felt when losing objects of personal

importance. Students continued to explore this theme in an image activity (Boal, 2006) where they drew pictures to represent their responses and lost objects. This activity was then turned into a hallway display where students posted their image work on a hallway bulletin board so the rest of the school could see it. Beginning in workshop seven students focused on examining the button that Corduroy lost and how he might have prevented losing it in the first place. This discussion quickly progressed into one where students shared stories of things dear to them, that like Corduroy, they too misplaced or lost.

Feeling misunderstood or not listened to by other people

Building upon initial exploration in earlier workshops, students revisited the notion of being misunderstood or not listened to by others, especially parents. This idea dominated the sociodrama scenes in workshop ten where students such as Madalynn, Farhani and Amar all shared personal stories of when they felt their parents, in particular mothers, were not listening to them. Although the grocer does not understand the character Max in the story *Bunny Cakes* (Wells, 1997) due to a communication problem (for example Max is a quiet, nonverbal character whose attempts at communicating through drawings are not understood by the grocer) students interpreted this problem to be similar to feeling as though someone was purposely not listening to another. In each of the proposed situations, students expressed that they felt as though their mothers were too busy to listen to them. In workshop twelve a scene was finally proposed in which a student felt that she was being misunderstood (and not ignored) by her father. Inga shared a story in which her father had become very angry with her because he thought she was making silly noises while they both were traveling in the family car. It was the car, not

Inga that was making the noises. She tried to explain to her father what had happened to create the noise, but he misunderstood the meaning of what she was saying.

Not being allowed to do something

Inspired by the stories *I Was So Mad* (Mayer, 1983) and *Bunny Cakes* (Wells, 1997) students repeatedly explored the idea of wanting to help another person in order to do something (for example bake a cake, go to the store) but not being able or allowed. In workshop three students explored many of the situations in the Mayer (1983) book which portrayed the young boy wanting to do some specific activity (for example put frogs in the bathtub, play with his sister, help his grandpa paint the house) but was not allowed to. In explorations of the *Corduroy* (1968) book students discussed and acted out the mother refusing to buy the character Lisa the Corduroy bear in the department store. Workshop four continued to focus on the idea of a person not being allowed to do something they wanted to. Students focused on specific situations in the book where the character Max wanted to help out his big sister Ruby in making their grandma a cake, but Ruby would not allow him to help. In his effort to help out anyway, he got in Ruby's way and ended up knocking some of the baking ingredients off the counter and onto the floor. Students spent four sociodrama scenes exploring Max's desire to help Ruby and his baking accidents and how these could be resolved. Naresh was able to extend the explorations in these scenes into his own life, volunteering a story during workshop twelve about when his father would not allow him to play in the park. He asked for permission repeatedly, but his father refused to allow him to go.

Experimenting with different roles

One of the most interesting themes that I noticed emerging from the sociodramatic workshops and discussions with Mrs. Brown was that of students experimenting voluntarily in role as characters that differed from them greatly in age or who were the opposite gender. Both male and female participants engaged in this exploration of character. The teacher explained in her first interview that she attempted to promote a safe environment in her classroom, which encourages risk-taking and personal exploration by students. She stated,

It is my opinion that children learn through experience. They explore and manipulate the world around them in order to get an understanding of their environment. Teachers can have a large impact on the learning of a child, as well, teachers offer their students the chance for new experiences.

Hamlett and Fannin (2006) echo this sentiment by encouraging student exploration of the opposite gender in classroom play and activity time. It is through this uncensored and unrestricted dramatic exploration that students have the opportunity to discover their immediate environment and learn more about themselves and their peers.

Beginning in workshop two, Amar was the first student to volunteer to act in role as a character of the opposite gender. During a sociodramatic activity that explored characters from the book *We Share Everything* (Munsch, 1999) Amar volunteered himself to play the lead female character of Amanda. When the other students realized his request, they immediately giggled and stared at him. Noticing his peers' reactions, Amar withdrew his request to act as Amanda and instead asks to be the male character, Jeremiah.

Although the students reacted by laughing when Amar expressed his interest in acting in a female role, they did not appear to be surprised or think it strange when Dana volunteered to act as a little boy in a sociodrama scene in workshop five. Inga also had no reaction from her peers when she volunteered to act in role as the grandpa. In this same workshop, Madalynn volunteered to act as the grandpa, a role that was opposite in gender and very different in age. Reflecting upon this experience, Madalynn explained that she wanted “to pretend I am like my own poppy [grandfather]. When I was the grandpa it felt like I was going back and forth on something. My stomach felt a little different...a little scary but a little fun.” In discussion and reflection Inga shared that “I got to be the grandpa today! I had fun because I got to be a boy and it felt silly!”

Dana’s interest in portraying roles of the opposite gender continued into workshop six where she acted in role as Farhani’s brother who was fighting with Farhani over a toy. In this same workshop Farhani took over the role of a girl in a scene where an accident with a toy occurs. Interestingly, although Farhani was only the second boy to express interest in portraying a female in the sociodrama since Amar in workshop two, students did not react to Farhani by laughing and staring as they did Amar. Farhani also attempted to act in a role that differed in age when role-played the grandpa in the scene exploring the book *I Was so Mad* (Meyer, 1983).

In this same workshop Ian volunteered to act as Amar’s mother in a scene in which Amar was reminding his mom that she has forgotten to buy him the batteries that she promised long ago. However when Naresh provided a new response for the mother and replaced Farhani in the scene, he requested that the role be changed to a father so he

could act it out. He appeared uncomfortable assuming the role of the mother and that was why he wanted the role to change.

Students continued their exploration of role-playing unfamiliar people in workshop nine. Field notes indicated that Raja, who up until this workshop had acted in stereotypical females roles (for example mother, sister, friend) took a turn as a different character. Acting as Corduroy, the boy teddy bear, she explored how he might have been able to ask others for help with his missing button. Although this was the first time Raja acted in a masculine role, she moved with ease throughout the sociodrama, requiring no support from her teacher or peers. Madalynn continued acting in masculine roles with ease, also enacting the character Corduroy in a scene where the watchman fixed his missing button before he left the store.

Madalynn continued with her experimentation in masculine roles in workshop eleven, where she volunteered to act as Max bunny (Wells, 1997) in a scene where he has difficulty staying out of his sister's way as she bakes a cake for their grandma. Towards the end of the workshop she acted as the male grocer in the final sociodrama scene. Reflexive journal entries revealed that as Madalynn's level of participation and commitment to the sociodrama appeared to increase, so did her experimentation and involvement with different roles. Madalynn was the most active student in the class who experimented with roles that differed greatly from her in age and gender.

It is interesting to note that the students such as Inga, Madalynn, Farhani, and Raja, who repeatedly engaged in roles that differed in age or gender, are the students whose participation and commitment to the drama appeared to increase by the conclusion of the twelfth workshop. The only other student in this category, Naresh, made it clear

that he did not want to act in a female role when he changed the role of mother to father before he entered the sociodrama scene in workshop six.

According to Hamlett and Fannin (2006) pre-school age in children is a vital time for experimentation and exploration of gender identity in dramatic play. Specifically, cross-gendered play is described as when a child pretends to act as a member of the opposite sex in order to explore and experience behaviours they have previously observed (Hamlett & Fannin, 2006; McHale, Crouter, & Whiteman, 2003). This dramatic exploration may aid children in repelling gendered stereotypes against their sex and misunderstandings about the opposite sex as well as understanding their own gender identity more fully. Hamlett and Fannin (2006) urge parents and teachers to embrace cross-gendered play as a natural developmental and educational learning opportunity for all students in the classroom.

Reflections from an A/r/tographer's Perspective

Although a/r/tography provides its practitioners the opportunity to think of themselves in three unique identities, artist, researcher, and teacher, like Springgay (2004), I too, have found it difficult to think of myself in the three different domains or "split identities" (p.11) of artist, researcher and teacher. Springgay states that in a/r/tographic research, "I am always an artist" (p.11) even when in role as researcher or teacher. As a kindergarten teacher my background in drama in education reflects my commitment to the arts: the play-based learning, the learning through the arts approach, the authentic community of cooperative learners I am attempting to encourage, the democratic practices in place in the classroom, the creation of personal, liberating pieces of artwork through dramatic experiences, and the self-reflection and analysis of the

exploration process. As an educator I am drawn to act in role as an a/r/tographer in the classroom, while encouraging my students to also become artists, exploring together, asking questions of one another, finding answers and even more questions, and teaching one another through arts-based, play-based, authentic experiences. This dissertation has provided me with the unique opportunity to enhance my knowledge and practice as an artist, researcher, and teacher through inquiry into the two distinct domains of sociodrama (theatre) and early childhood education. As stated by Piirto (2002), I am “seeking to synthesize the expression of [my] work in both domains – the domain of the art and the domain of education” (p.444) through artistic inquiry.

According to Irwin (2004) a/r/tography is “about each of us living a life of deep meaning enhanced through perceptual practices that reveal what was once hidden, create what has never been known, and what we hope to achieve” (p.36). This dissertation (as well as my entire doctoral experience) has provided me with the rich opportunity of reflecting upon and further developing myself as an a/r/tographer. Artistic inquiry emphasizes the journey of participating in the aesthetic research opportunity, not just the findings or constructed *product* of a dissertation paper or presentation (Neilson, Cole, & Knowles, 2001). The holistic experience of this doctoral degree has allowed me to uncover and develop aspects of my artistic and educational practices that I was doing that were hidden, like encouraging the artist within each of my students by providing multiple opportunities for learning through the arts at classroom centers, and creating new personal practices through the challenging and abandoning of practices such as standardized assessment that I feel are not developmentally or pedagogically appropriate. Piirto (2002) posits that sometimes the true intentions and meanings behind our thoughts

and actions in research become revealed with an almost nostalgic, self-reflection that occurs long after the fact. Looking back, I realize that I became an a/r/tographer in my first doctoral course when I began to question the traditional educational philosophies and practices I had been taught and was practicing, and instead sought something more alive, more real (Irwin, 2004; Garoian, 1999) for use in my life as an educator. The knowledge and theory that I was presented through my doctoral experiences gave me the encouragement to fight against practices that administration and some of my colleagues were encouraging in my kindergarten classroom (for example standardized assessment, heavy focus on rote-learning, overemphasis on reading and writing) that I felt were not appropriate for kindergarten students. The doctoral degree and this a/r/tographic experience have ignited an inner hope and excitement for what my artistic/educational/scholarly future has in store. I am evolving from a kindergarten teacher to a *kinderg/a/r/t/en teacher*. Each of these experiences have inspired me to explore the use of sociodrama in the kindergarten classroom – a topic much different than my original proposed area of research, which was using drama to explore islamophobia in schools.

Artist /A/

Piirto (2002) questions whether qualitative researchers utilizing arts-based methodologies must be qualified and skilled in the art form they are exploring and representing. She ponders whether the quality of the artwork matters in the overall aesthetic experience of the research. Does the artistic experience of delving into personal and social issues through the artistic medium outweigh the importance of the artistic knowledge and mastery of that particular field? When I first conceived of this artistic

dissertation, of using sociodrama with kindergarten students, I was fixated on the potential, transformative power of the sociodrama. I wanted to use the art form as a medium for change, a “workshop” (Piirto, 2002, p.443) for students to engage within. It was easy for me to become lost in the moment and sometimes forget about the art of theatre, the pure essentials of performance and how Mrs. Brown and her students would interact within this domain throughout the research process.

The issue of artistic exploration, using theatre and the tools of performance, began to emerge in the observable experiences of students as their participation in the sociodrama was limited at the beginning of the study by their lack of expertise and experiences in the basics of theatre and acting. How could students begin to use sociodrama as a tool for personal and collective exploration and change if they could not interact with each other using fundamental elements (role-playing, gesturing, speaking in role, eye contact, stage presence, etcetera) of theatre? As an artist I began to realize that the essentials of performance, not just the workshop dramatization was of great importance for the experiences of students (Piirto, 2002).

Porter (2004) encourages a/r/tographers to bring their art form directly to students in an effort to affect the environment. When teachers become teacher-artists, classrooms are transformed into studios. “Living what we teach makes the curriculum real to students” (Porter, 2004, p.113). As a result students may begin to think of themselves as student-artists. Although it was Mrs. Brown, and not me, who led students directly in the dramatic workshops, students probably would not have experienced them with Mrs. Brown had she and I not collaborated on this study. Mrs. Brown is an experienced early childhood educator, but it is I who is the experienced dramatist. Working together,

combining our passions for both the domains of dramatic arts and kindergarten, we created an environment in the classroom that began to encourage student exploration in sociodrama. With each successive workshop, student engagement within the activities appeared to flourish alongside Mrs. Brown's appreciation for and interest in the use of drama in the classroom. Even as an observer, watching Mrs. Brown and her students engage and improve in the dramatic techniques and processes, I was growing as an artist, reflecting upon the performances I was privileged to witness and inspired to continue seeking ways to unite the dramatic arts with early childhood education.

Originally I did not consider Mrs. Brown to be much of an artist in this study. In the initial interview Mrs. Brown expressed to me that she did not engage herself or her students regularly in dramatic elements in the classroom. Drama was something that was not included in the daily lives of students in this classroom, with the exception of the dramatic arts center accessed during playtime. However, it is evident from the second interview with Mrs. Brown that she was beginning to value the use of drama in the classroom and considered it to be an alternative learning opportunity for students. In her final interview Mrs. Brown reflected on her growth as an artist, incorporating drama into her regular classroom practices:

Prior to participating in the drama workshops I used a little drama in my kindergarten program through music and movement. I have a passion for music and often incorporate it into my lesson planning. The workshops brought drama into my program through acting and improvisation, something I had not done in the past. I often observe the children during centre time as they participate in acting drama activities at the "House Centre" or "The Puppet Theater". The

workshops brought acting into our circle time and allowed the children to take a situation in a story book and apply it to everyday social situations. The children were able to express their thoughts, fears, excitement and sometimes social conflicts through drama. (second interview)

Mrs. Brown indicated repeatedly to me during our final personal communications that she planned on implementing dramatic activities more regularly into her classroom in the future. Mrs. Brown is becoming a dramatist. Her artistic practice, philosophy, and knowledge appeared to evolve as a result of her participation in the study.

Like Mrs. Brown, I too have grown as an artist, inspired by the experiences and enthusiasm of students and eager to immerse myself in the sociodrama. I have witnessed the possibilities of using drama with young students and am eager to continue implementing it in my classroom. I have a reenergized appreciation for watching others in dramatic performances and would like to continue to be a consumer of theatre. I have experimented with representing dramatic art in the form of narrative and am interested in exploring this in future scholarly activities. This doctoral experience has reminded me that I always need to reconnect with my artistic roots – I always need to exist as a kinderg/a/r/tener in my life– taking risks in play, creating, interacting, exploring. I need to continue cre(art)ing with my students. Theatrics and performance for the sake of practicing and maintaining a high quality of the craft must be emphasized when using drama with students. From my observations of the students in this study, it appears essential for young students to have a basic understanding and ability level in the basics of theatre before they can become comfortable exploring higher degrees of difficulty and exploration within the craft.

Researcher /R/

Like a tree whose branches extend from one support source, I have grown and extended my practice and understanding of research throughout the doctoral experience. I recall sitting in my first Ph.D. course, petrified that I was the only student who was unsure of what exactly the professor was discussing or that I would be called upon to provide an opinion. This imposter syndrome, or chronic self-doubt in the face of success, pervaded much of my early doctoral coursework. I felt unsure of myself as a 'researcher'. These feelings, however, passed with time and I began to become more confident in my abilities. With each new doctoral and professional experience, my epistemologies regarding the use of artistic and early years education transformed and grew and I became very aware that it was the use of sociodrama in today's standardized classrooms that I wanted to explore. I desired to encourage my young kindergarten students to become artists and aimed to provide a safe and creative venue for them to individually and collectively explore issues of importance.

Hobson (1996) reminds us that "the person stands at the center of his or her own life space, and that an understanding of that life can only be accomplished by beginning with the perspective of that individual" (p.2). This written dissertation has undergone numerous revisions, where I have slowly taken risks in writing, reflecting and representing using personal narrative, storytelling, visual images, font play, and open reflection. This dissertation has helped me to begin to shed my habit of researching, reflecting, and representing in the traditionally accepted scholarly ways and instead begin to take a risk and use alternative forms of data collection, analysis and representation (Eisner, 1997). Just as I question who I am as an educator and constantly seek out new

questions for my practice, I am beginning to do the same when in role as researcher. It is my hope to continue to explore the use of a/r/tography and how I might be able to use alternative representation to present the essence of the inquiry being explored. I want to continue using a/r/tography as a method of exploration in my classroom. I have consumed the a/r/tographic literature used for this dissertation and want to continue to read about diverse artistic inquiries.

I believe that Mrs. Brown also developed as a researcher alongside me through this doctoral experience. When she and I first communicated regarding her potential participation in this study, she expressed some interest in what I was interested in exploring. Originally she agreed to participate because she felt her students could benefit from the drama experience and she was interested in what sociodrama was about. She felt her teaching schedule might be reduced by having the workshops in place of her regular kindergarten programming (personal communication, February 2007). However, as the study progressed and she and I discussed, planned, and implemented the skeletal workshops, I noticed a change in Mrs. Brown's level of interest and engagement within the research component of this study (reflective journal, p. 22). She was beginning to question some of her original epistemologies regarding the traditional structure of her lessons and classroom and how she might implement more drama into her kindergarten program as a result of the students' involvement. She was re-evaluating some of her practices as a teacher and thinking about how she could re-think and implement these ideas into future educational situations (Cole & Knowles, 2000). She was realizing the potential power of the arts in education. She was interested in my observations of students and asked to review copies of my field notes. After the conclusion of the study

she contacted me on a number of occasions to inquire about my observations of the students' explorations within the sociodrama and whether I had begun to write up the study. She expressed a desire to have a copy of the completed dissertation for her own records. She had become a researcher.

Teacher /T/

Pryer (2004) compares the praxis of a/r/tography to "intellectual nomadism".

The metaphor of nomadism illuminates certain recurring thematic elements contained within the personal, theoretical, and visual narratives of many of these artists/researchers/teachers, in particular: understandings of identity, belonging, space, place, boundaries, change, temporality, direction, orientation, presence, and absence. (p.21)

As the intellectual marathon of the Ph.D. winds down, and I reflect upon my doctoral experiences, I am inspired to become a nomadic educator, continuously striving to improve my crafts of education and dramatic arts. I do not want to stand still in my classroom stuck in the bureaucratic mud, but instead want to run free forward and backward, inside and outside continuing to explore how students might be able to experience sociodrama in the classroom. I want to challenge the norms and customs of the current educational institution regarding kindergarten practice and pedagogy. Further, I am inspired by Boal's (2006) aesthetics of the oppressed, which incorporates multiple artistic elements into the sociodrama. How might I be able to engage and inspire students within these artistic elements? I desire to become a diverse artist, exploring other creative elements alongside my students. I do not want to limit myself with drama. I want to become something more.

de Cosson (2004) reminds us that as teachers we are constantly “(re)learning” (p.147) from our students. Similar to Freire’s (1970) problem posing concept of education where the Teacher becomes teacher-learner and the student becomes student-teacher. The student as “‘other’ is constantly” reflecting ideas back to the teacher (de Cosson, 2004, p.147). As a kinderg/a/r/t/en teacher I have always strived to promote authentic, explorative, and artistic experiences in my classroom for students. I now need to engage even more deeply in these activities with my students.

The doctoral experience has radically altered my practice as an educator. I have abandoned the more traditional educational ways that were instilled in me as a student teacher and have begun to experiment in the classroom. I am attempting to encourage this exploration and experimentation with the teacher candidates currently placed in our classroom. I believe that as a result of her participation in this study, Mrs. Brown also has changed as an educator. Realizing through her artistic experiences in this study that dramatic art provides a powerful alternative agent for learning and change within the classroom, she has indicated on numerous occasions (personal communication, April and May 2007) that she will begin to rethink her use of the arts, in particular drama in the classroom and provide more opportunities for arts-based exploration and reflection.

I noticed that the children who often do not participate during regular circle time were excited and wanted to be involved everyday. I often heard children saying after circle time "Can we do some more.." this really inspired me to continue. I observed children who often do not communicate were communicating more and coming up with some wonderful ideas during the drama workshops. Another observation I made was that the drama workshops provided an opportunity for the

children to develop a sense of how to "act". Many children were assigning roles and characters to their drama activities. This was then extended during centre time in the house centre where they continued to apply these techniques. Many children were asking to take the story books to the book centre so they could continue acting out scenarios. I saw so many benefits from being a part of the study. Not only did the children benefit from the experience I developed in my teaching and plan to use drama throughout my program in many different ways. It was an amazing experience! (Mrs. Brown, second interview)

Implications for further research

As a result of this study multiple implications for further research have been revealed including the need for more sociodramatic activities to be conducted with kindergarteners, an examination of the traditional kindergarten classroom and how it affects authentic student participation and spontaneity, how classroom practice can evolve from teacher-directed to more student-led and experience activities, and how teachers might be able to help diverse student populations find common contexts for exploration in classroom activities.

Due to the limited literature available regarding the use of sociodramatic activities with young children, especially those in kindergarten, it appears as though further a/r/tographic exploration is required. This study was bound in place and time, taking place during one month of the school year. It would be interesting to conduct this study across a longer span of time (for example several months, the entire school year) to discover exactly how students initiate and resolve sociodramatic scenes once they have had much exposure to the dramatic techniques and are comfortable in the environment. In

the future I hope to continue exploring the use of social drama formats (for example sociodrama, role-playing, playback theatre, tableau) with young children within my classroom. As an a/r/tographer I want to continue to explore how the atmosphere develops as a result of sociodrama being included on a regular basis in the classroom. How might the experiences in the sociodrama evolve if students are engaged within the art for a longer period, perhaps across the entire school year? What differences would be observed in the workshops if students who have an experienced background in dramatic arts participated in the sociodrama?

In this study student participation in the workshops was directly and indirectly influenced by the structure of the classroom environment and outside interruptions. One has to consider the possible affects these events may have had in regards to authentic student participation and spontaneity. The same study conducted in a classroom with a different environment and greater or fewer interruptions would undoubtedly result in a very different research project. Each teacher has his or her own epistemology regarding appropriate early childhood education pedagogy. Mrs. Brown had some different philosophies for early childhood education than myself. It would be interesting to compare this study to one conducted in a more liberal, democratic classroom. My desire as an a/r/tographer is to continue to challenge the traditional view of kindergarten classrooms and rise against the current trend of standardized assessment and learning objectives in early years classrooms by incorporating artistic, manipulative, exploration, social, and authentic experiences into my classroom.

One of the major observations of this research was that as the workshops progressed, activities that were very teacher-directed and created became increasingly

student-centered and authentic. Students in this study had very little prior drama experience and perhaps this affected their ability to immediately delve into the activities with confidence and commitment for participation. As students became more comfortable within the drama arts elements their involvement in the workshops became more fluid. Students participated in activities and discussions with more ease and required less prompting and encouragement from their teacher. Because students first needed to learn about and practice using the dramatic arts elements, it appears reasonable that workshops were more teacher-directed and initiated towards the beginning of the study. Also, due to the constraints of the educational environment and the pre-existing expectations that students follow rules, wait their turn to speak, watch the teacher for cues, etcetera, it appears reasonable to assume that students would need time and practice before initiating their ideas into dramatic scenes. Further research should be conducted with different students to see if the difference in classroom environment and structure encourages more student initiated and implemented issues and concerns in the sociodrama work.

This a/r/tographic inquiry has been the culmination of three years of doctoral preparation and a lifetime of passion for the dramatic arts. As an early childhood educator who cares passionately about providing students with liberatory, creative, authentic, and collaborative experiences in the classroom, it was a pleasure for me to witness firsthand Senior Kindergarten students engaging in sociodrama -- a very complicated and sophisticated form of social theatre. I look forward to what my personal, professional, and scholarly futures hold and hope to continue to a/r/tographically explore the use of sociodrama and other empowering activities for students in kindergarten research.

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Appendix A: Teacher Interview Guide (Pre Sociodrama Workshops)

1. Tell me about your teaching experiences. How long have you been teaching and what grades have you previously taught.
2. Tell me about your teaching and assessment philosophies for the early years.
3. Describe the physicality of your classroom for me.
4. Describe the culture of your students for me.
5. Briefly list one or two words to describe each student in your class.

**Appendix B: Letter and Form of Permission to Conduct Research in XXX
Board of Education**

January 10, 2007

Dr. XXX
XXX School Board

Dear Dr. XXX,

As a doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor, I am requesting permission from the XXX School Board to conduct a research study on whether caring and empathetic interactions among Senior Kindergarten student can be fostered through the use of twelve sociodrama workshops. This proposal is in partial requirement of my degree of Doctorate of Philosophy in Educational Studies.

The study will be conducted at one elementary school (yet to be determined through consultation with early years staff and administration). Participants will be one Senior Kindergarten teacher and his or her male and female Senior Kindergarten students.

Participation is completely voluntary and participants may withdraw at any point. No foreseen harm will come to students in the study. Parental consent will be sought before any workshops occur or data collection begins. Data obtained will be confidential and accessed by my doctoral supervising committee and myself. All participant information will remain confidential and pseudonyms will be used in the written report.

A copy of the complete doctoral dissertation proposal submitted to my doctoral supervising committee is available upon request. Once the study is complete, a copy of it will be provided to the XXX School Board and the participating school. If you have any further questions, please contact me at XXX-XXXX or my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Kara Smith, at XXX-XXXX ext. XXXX.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Deanna Marie Pecaski McLennan

Application for Permission to Conduct Research
XXX School Board

- I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION
- a. Name of Investigator: Deanna Marie Pecaski McLennan
 - b. Address: XXX
 - c. Phone Number: XXX-XXXX
 - d. Affiliation/Institution: Faculty of Education, University of Windsor
 - e. Context: Dissertation Component of the Doctorate of Philosophy in Educational Studies degree
- II. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH
- a. Title of Research: Kinder-caring: Exploring the use and effects of sociodrama in a kindergarten classroom
 - b. Issue/Hypothesis to be Researched: The proposed research questions are: Can sociodrama be successfully implemented with kindergarten students? What instances and understandings of empathy and caring occur among a teacher and students in a four-week sociodrama workshop?
 - c. Purpose of Research: This study is interested in exploring whether the sociodramatic activities of Boal and Moreno can be successfully used in a Senior Kindergarten classroom and what issues and themes emerge from the sociodrama. It is also interested in exploring whether instances and understandings of empathy and care occur among students and their teacher in the sociodrama workshops.
 - d. Relevance of Research to Education: This study seeks to discover whether the basic sociodramatic activities of Boal and Moreno can be transferred into a Senior Kindergarten setting with the same success as they have had in other educational and social contexts. This study is also interested in observing whether students and their teacher might become more empathic and caring in their interactions with each other within and beyond the sociodramatic workshops.
 - e. Procedure for Sample/Participant Selection: The participants of this study will consist of one Senior Kindergarten class and one Senior Kindergarten teacher (and any other staff that might be part of the classroom including educational assistants, child and youth workers, etcetera). The criteria for participant selection will be purposive. The researcher will invite a prospective teacher-participant through an informal request.
 - f. Procedure to ensure confidentiality and anonymity: Students will not be referred to by their given names in written and oral components of the research. Work in the actual drama workshops will be kept confidential.

All work will be done in a comfortable, safe classroom space. Written records, questionnaires, participant journals, videotapes and field notes will be kept in the office at my home until their final disposal, which will involve them being shredded. Only I will have access to the data kept in the office of my home.

- g. Instruments/Forms/Questionnaires/etcetera to be used (attached): Please find attached a copy of the University of Windsor permission form, which will be used to obtain parental consent.
- h. Proposed Data Analysis: Sociodrama workshops will occur 3 times a week (40 minutes each) for the month of April. Qualitative methods for data collection include teacher personal reflection journals, teacher interviews (prior to, midpoint, and at the conclusion of the implementation of the four-week sociodrama workshops), personal correspondence between the teacher and researcher (including telephone conversations, email, and personal communications), individual student reflection journals, and visual and oral representations by students in sociodramatic workshops, and whole group student member checks at the conclusion of the four-week sociodrama workshops. Sociodrama workshops will be videotaped to aid the research with coding and analysis as field notes will be difficult to write when the researcher is leading the drama.

Data collection, coding, and analysis will be simultaneous and sequential throughout the implementation of the four-week sociodrama workshops in an effort to “render the material...in some kind of integrated, complete, logical, succinct way” (Woods, 1986, p.125). In the tradition of analyzing qualitative data using collaborative social research techniques, the “artifacts of social communication” (Berg, 2001, p.240) (for example journals, interviews, personal correspondence, etcetera) that are collected from the sociodramas will be recorded, coded and sorted on an ongoing basis for the duration of the four weeks of the study (Woods, 1986). In an effort to organize the qualitative data collection and analysis, the following activities outlined by Berg (2001, p.240) will be followed:

- ❖ “Data are collected and made into text (for example field notes, interview transcripts, journals, etcetera)”
- ❖ “Codes are analytically developed or inductively identified in the data and affixed to sets of notes or transcript pages”
- ❖ “Codes are transformed into categorical labels or themes”
- ❖ “Materials are sorted by these categories, identifying similar phrases, patterns, relationships, and commonalities or disparities”
- ❖ “Sorted materials are examined to isolate meaningful patterns and processes”
- ❖ “Identified patterns are considered in light of previous research and theories, and a small set of generalizations are established”

The artifacts of social communication (Berg, 2001) will be examined using “content analysis” which is defined by Holsti (1968) as “any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages” (p.608). In an effort to analyze data objectively, “criteria of selection” (Berg, 2001, p.241) will be used as recurring patterns and themes emerge from the multiple sources of data using manifest and latent content. Manifest content are “those elements that are physically present and countable” or “surface structure” in the data while latent content is “an interpretive reading of the symbolism underlying the physical data” or “deep structural meaning” (Berg, 2001, p.242). Because a/r/tography and analysis occur in “synthetical moments- experiences of profound insight that merge time, space, and self in seamless transhistorical moments [that are] not clearly categorized within the rigid disciplinary boundaries” (Slattery & Langerock, 2002, p.350) of traditional, positivist research, and in the traditional of a/r/tography, data collection and analysis will be ongoing (Woods, 1986).

- i. Dates for Beginning Data Collection: Monday, April 2, 2007
Ending Data Collection: Friday, April 27, 2007

III REQUIREMENTS FROM THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

- a. School/Record Information Required: No student record information is required.
- b. School Facilities Required: The sociodrama workshops will occur in the regular kindergarten classroom.
- c. School Personnel Assistance Required: No personnel are required. The teacher of the Senior Kindergarten students will be present at all times throughout the sociodrama workshops.
- d. Subjects/Participants Required: The sociodrama workshops are to occur with one Senior Kindergarten class at an elementary school yet to be determined. The students are all in one class. The sociodrama curriculum proposed for the group (which falls under the Ontario Ministry of Education guidelines) focuses on Moreno and Boal role-play and sociodrama.
- e. When/Time Required: The proposed sociodrama workshops will occur three times a week with the Senior Kindergarten class, for a forty minute period each time. The workshops will occur for four consecutive weeks.
- f. Schools/Grades Required: One class of Senior Kindergarten students is required.
- g. Preferred Schools/Grades Required: The participating school has not yet been determined.

IV PROCEDURES FOR INFORMING SCHOOLS AND PARENTS AND PROVIDING FEEDBACK

- a. Provisions for preparing and debriefing participants: Students, parents and their teacher will be informed of the purpose of the study at the beginning of the workshops and will be informed of the results of the study at the end of the workshops. Each drama workshop will include a dramatic warm-up as preparation for the dramatic work, and a cool-down, which will allow students to reflect on their work in the drama workshop. At the end of each drama workshop, students will be given time to write/draw feelings, ideas and pictures in a reflective personal journal.
- b. Method of Obtaining Informed Consent: A letter of consent to participants and parents/guardians will be obtained from students before the workshops and data collection begins. This consent form is the recommended form according to the Review Ethics Board of the University of Windsor. The researcher will obtain final permission for commencement of this research from the Supervising Doctoral Committee, Faculty of Education and the Review Ethics Board at the University of Windsor. Permission to conduct research from the XXX School Board is a requirement for permission to be granted from the Doctoral Committee and Review Ethics Board at the University of Windsor.
- c. Procedures for Providing Feedback to Participating Schools: The principal, Senior Kindergarten Teacher, students and parents of the involved school will be informed of the results of this study. The researcher will ensure that results are provided in written form to the principal and teacher. Any parents requesting information will be invited to contact the researcher, who is also a teacher at XXX Public School.
- d. Expected Date for Submission of Completed Research to the Research Review Committee of the XXX School Board: The 4 week sociodrama workshops and the collection of data are expected to be completed by Friday, April 27, 2007. The researcher hopes to have this dissertation completed and defended by June 2008 (or earlier if possible).

V. STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT

I agree that this research will be conducted in accordance with the current policy of XXX School Board regarding the Conduct of Research and any particular directives given by the Research Review Committee of the Board.

Deanna Marie Pecaski McLennan (Principal Researcher) January 10, 2007

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: **Kinder-caring: Exploring the use and effects of sociodrama in a kindergarten classroom**

Your child is being asked to participate in a research study conducted by **Deanna Pecaski McLennan**, from the **Faculty of Education** at the University of Windsor as the **dissertation component** of the **Doctorate of Philosophy in Educational Studies** degree.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact **Dr. Kara Smith**, **Doctoral Supervisor** at the University of Windsor at **XXX-XXXX**, ext. **XXXX**.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is interested in exploring whether the sociodramatic activities of Boal and Moreno can be successfully used in a Senior Kindergarten classroom and what issues and themes emerge from the sociodrama. It is also interested in exploring whether instances and understandings of empathy and care occur among students and their teacher in the sociodrama workshops.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to have your child participate in this study, I would ask him/her to do the following things:

- a. Participate with his/her Senior Kindergarten classmates in drama workshops (three times a week for the month of April, 40 minutes each) that are based on the sociodramatic work of Boal and Moreno and fulfil kindergarten dramatic arts curriculum. These workshops will be held in the Senior Kindergarten classroom.
- b. Record responses to the drama in written and picture form in a reflective journal.
- c. Participate with his/her peers in a whole class group interview at the conclusion of the drama workshops.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no known or anticipated physical or psychological risks for participants in this study.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Students who participate in this study will benefit from the opportunity to participate in dramatic activities. Participation in drama has been shown to increase student self-esteem, self-concept, and risk-taking abilities. The sociodramatic activities will allow students the opportunity to explore issues of group interest and concern (for example sharing toys, turn-taking). The researcher is also interested in exploring whether student interactions become more empathetic and caring as a result of involvement in the drama.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There is no payment for participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. **Students will not be referred to by their given names in written and oral components of the research. Work in the actual drama workshops will be kept confidential. All work will be done in a comfortable, safe classroom space. Written records, questionnaires, participant journals, videotapes and field notes will be kept in the office at my home until their final disposal, which will involve them being shredded. Only I will have access to the data kept in the office of my home.**

Drama workshops will be videotaped. Only the researcher and supervising doctoral committee at the University of Windsor will have access to the videotapes. The purpose of videotaping the drama workshops is so that the researcher (who will be leading the drama) will have the opportunity to review the workshops when they are completed from an observer's perspective.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether your child participates in this study or not. If you volunteer your child to be in this study, you may withdraw your child at any time without consequences of any kind. Your child may also refuse to answer any questions he or she doesn't want to answer and still remain in the study.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS

The principal and teacher will be informed of the results of this study and provided a copy of the written report. Any parents requesting information will be invited to contact the researcher.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

This data may be used in subsequent studies.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding your child's rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3916; e-mail: lbunn@uwindsor.ca.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study "**Kinder-caring: Exploring the use and effects of sociodrama in a kindergarten classroom**" as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to have my child participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Senior Kindergarten Student

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

Deanna Pecaski McLennan

Date

Appendix D: Letter of Information for Consent to Participate in Research



Dear Parents/Guardians,

Your child is being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Deanna Pecaski McLennan from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor as part of a doctoral dissertation proposal. Deanna is also an elementary teacher for the XXX School Board. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact Dr. Kara Smith (Dissertation Supervisor) at 519-253-3000, ext. 3826. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. You can choose whether or not your child will be in this study. If you volunteer your child to be in this study, you may withdraw him or her at any time without consequences of any kind.

Sociodrama is a special form of interactive drama that allows its participants the opportunity to explore and find resolutions to issues of social concern or interest. In a kindergarten environment, these might include sharing, turn-taking, or cooperative play. The purpose of this study is to explore whether sociodrama can be successfully used in a Senior Kindergarten classroom and whether it may help promote empathetic and caring relationships among students.

If you volunteer to have your child participate in this study, I would ask him/her to do the following things:

- **Participate with his/her Senior Kindergarten classmates in drama workshops (three times a week for the month of April, 40 minutes each) that are based on the sociodramatic work of Boal and Moreno and fulfil kindergarten dramatic arts curriculum. These workshops will be held in the Senior Kindergarten classroom.**
- **Record responses to the drama in written and picture form in a reflective journal.**
- **Participate with his/her peers in a whole class group interview at the conclusion of the drama workshops.**

Workshops will be videotaped for the purposes of the researcher being able to review workshops after they occur.

Students who participate in this study will benefit from the opportunity to participate in dramatic activities. Participation in drama has been shown to increase student self-esteem, self-concept, and risk-taking abilities. The sociodramatic activities will allow students the opportunity to explore issues of group interest and concern (for example sharing toys, turn-taking). The researcher is also interested in exploring whether student interactions become more empathetic and caring as a result of involvement in the drama. There are no known or anticipated risks to participants in this study.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4; telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3916; e-mail: lbunn@uwindsor.ca.

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

Deanna Pecaski McLennan (principal researcher)

Date

Appendix E: Letter of Permission from Participating School Board

March 28, 2007

Ms. Deanna Marie McLennan
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

Dear Ms. McLennan:

Re: Kinder-caring: Exploring the use and effects of sociodrama in a kindergarten classroom. University of Windsor, Faculty of Education

This is to inform you that your research project has been approved by the Research Review Committee of the [REDACTED] School Board. The approval has been given in the context of the information provided in your proposal as well as the modifications made by you based on feedback from the Committee. These modifications include: a reduction in the length of each session from 40 minutes to approximately 20-25 minutes; and that no videotaping of the project will occur at any time. The committee reviewed the proposal from the perspective of any ethical concerns. The decision of any school to participate in the study however is at the discretion of the Principal of the school. The following conditions are brought to your attention from the general policy of the Board regarding the conduct of research:

General conditions

1. That the anonymity of participating staff, schools, and Board is assured in all future published articles or reports, contact with the news media, personal conversations, or other forms of communication, by any university or any other organizations or individuals involved in the project.
2. That the participation of all involved is on a strictly voluntary basis.
3. That parental permission be obtained for participants who are minors, and
4. That one copy of the report will be provided to this office at the completion of the study.

Specific conditions

1. As stipulated in our discussions it is your understanding that you are undertaking this research as an independent and private researcher and not in your capacity as an employee who is currently on maternity leave. Consequently, you acknowledge that you are not entitled to any of the

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benefits associated with employment with the Board while conducting your research. This extends to issues such as liability and workplace compensation.

2. It is also agreed that the completion of your research will not involve teacher evaluation of any form. In addition, your involvement in the classroom is with the agreement and consent of the classroom teacher.

You may find it helpful as you undertake your research to include a copy of this letter in your introductory package for the school Principal and participating classroom teacher. The Committee extends its best wishes for the successful completion of your study. I have enclosed an additional copy of this letter for you to submit to your University Research Ethics Coordinator.

Respectfully,



Philip W. R. Ricciardi, Ph.D., C. Psych.
Supervisor of Psychological Services
Chairperson, Research Review Committee

c.c.: [REDACTED] Superintendent of Human Resources
[REDACTED] Superintendent of Education

Appendix F: Teacher Interview Guide (Post Sociodrama Workshops)

1. Can you describe your role as facilitator of the drama workshops?
2. What was your experience attempting to lead students in a nonjudgmental through the sociodrama activities?
3. Can you comment on student participation in the twelve sociodrama workshops?
4. Can you comment on student commitment to the drama in the workshops?
5. Were there any students whose involvement in the sociodrama surprised you?
Can you elaborate?
6. Picture books were used as prompts for the drama activities. What were your thoughts regarding this?

Appendix G: The Twelve Sociodrama Workshops

Workshop One (April 10)

- ❖ Space Series Colour Warm-up (Boal, 2002, p.128)

Students walked around the room randomly. The teacher called out a colour (for example red). Students who were wearing that colour met together in the middle of the walking area and froze in a position. All others who were not wearing that colour continued to keep walking around the room until the teacher called another colour.

- ❖ *We Share Everything* (Munsch, 1999)

The teacher read the entire book to students. At the conclusion of the story the students were led through a discussion using comprehension questioning regarding the characters in the book and the problems they encountered (for example sharing classroom materials with others).

- ❖ Students then engaged in an Aesthetics of the Oppressed word activity

(Boal, 2006) that allowed them to perceive and respond to the social issues that arose from discussion regarding *We Share Everything* (Munsch, 1999).

The word activity: Students were reminded that in the story students in a kindergarten classroom shared different items. Students were asked to volunteer to verbally share the name of something in the classroom that they liked to share (for example blocks at the block center, snack) and how sharing these objects with their peers made them feel (for example happy, frustrated). The teacher scribed the names of these objects and associated feelings in a web graphic organizer on a large piece of chart paper that was hung on the classroom wall.

- ❖ Concluding Discussion and Reflection

There was time remaining at the end of this workshop, so the teacher improvised by playing a familiar song with students on the CD player. It was obvious the students were familiar with the song, which asked them to dramatize different faces to correspond with emotions (for example show a happy face, show a frustrated face, show a shy face). Students were asked how they felt when hearing the story. Students were asked if they have any questions or comments they wish to share.

Workshop Two (April 11)

❖ *Space Series Body Part Warm-up* (Boal, 2002, p.128)

Students walked around the room randomly. The teacher called out a body part (for example thumb, foot, knee) and students touched that body part to the same body part of another as quickly as possible.

❖ *We Share Everything* (Munsch, 1999)

Students were re-read the story and briefly questioned in order to remind them of the characters and social issue of sharing presented in the book. The teacher asked two students to volunteer to act out the parts of the characters “Amanda”, “Jeremiah” and “teacher”. Using prompts and simple props (for example book, blocks, paintbrush) the teacher guided the students (and the spectators in the audience) through a role-play of the beginning of the story (for example Amanda and Jeremiah arrive at school and immediately begin arguing over the books at the book center). Once the students had role-played the first conflict, the teacher asked students in the audience for suggestions on how Amanda and Jeremiah might be able to resolve their conflict. Once suggestions had been provided, students who offered suggestions for changes in response to the conflict were invited to take over the roles of Amanda and Jeremiah

and improvised a resolution to the conflict. This was done for each sharing conflict in the story (for example difficulties sharing books, blocks, and paint).

❖ **Concluding Discussion and Reflection**

Students were asked to volunteer personal experiences where they may have had difficulty sharing something with another (for example the computer with siblings).

The teacher briefly scribed these ideas on chart paper. Students were asked if they had any questions or comments they wished to share.

Workshop Three (April 12)

❖ Students discussed their participation in the workshops up to this point. Through Discussion, a collective list of situations was created wherein students had difficulty sharing with others was created.

❖ Students were asked to choose one situation to begin with. Once a situation was selected, through questioning and prompts the teacher helped students identify the characters and action in the situation. Similar to the previous workshop, students volunteered to role-play the selected situation. Once the entire situation had been role-played, students from the audience were invited to offer suggestions for alternate resolutions to the sharing conflict. Students volunteered to enact those resolutions. Numerous suggestions from the collective list were chosen and the same procedure took place.

❖ **Concluding Discussion and Reflection**

Students were asked to discuss their feelings and reactions to the improvised scenes in which they participated. The teacher led students in a series of stretches and guided imagery in order to reflect upon the day's activities. Soft music was played and

students were guided through a variety of movements in order to cool down. The teacher softly prompted them to think about their feelings and responses to the activities.

Workshop Four (April 16)

❖ **Ball Game Warm-up (Boal, 2002, p.140)**

Students formed pairs or small groups. Each played a ball game of their choice (for example catch, tennis, basketball) without using a real ball but acting as if they were.

❖ ***I Was So Mad* (Mayer, 1983)**

The teacher read the entire book to students. At the conclusion of the story, the students were led through a discussion using comprehension questions regarding the characters in the book and the problems they encounter (for example becoming angry when one doesn't get what one wants, wanting to run away from home).

❖ Students were engaged in an Aesthetics of the Oppressed sound activity (Boal, 2006) in order to allow them to perceive and respond to the social issues that arose from discussion regarding *I Was So Mad* (Mayer, 1983).

The sound activity: Students were asked to sit in a circle on the floor. They were given a number of musical instruments from the music center in the classroom. While closing their eyes, the teacher prompted students to create a soundscape and respond with "emotion sounds" to the different situations in the book (for example not being able to put frogs in the tub, not being able to play with little sister's dollhouse, etcetera). The teacher guided students through these situations, asking them to have their music rise and then fade until there was no more noise.

❖ **Concluding Discussion and Reflection**

Students were asked to comment on the experience of participating in the creation of the feeling soundscape. How did the noises make them feel? What does an angry noise sound like? Did making the noises make their response to the situations better or worse? Students were asked if they had any questions or comments they wished to share.

Workshop Five (April 17)

❖ *Animals Warm-up* (Boal, 2002, p.145)

One student volunteered to be an animal and acted as that animal without telling the rest of the group what animal he or she was. Attention was paid to the size of body, noises, characteristics or movements. The rest of the group called out the names of animals until the proper one was guessed.

❖ *I Was So Mad* (Mayer, 1983)

The teacher re-read this story to the class. Students were reminded of the different situations in the story that angered the main character and how he wanted to respond by running away. In the same fashion as workshop two, students volunteered to reenact the different situations in the story (for example the boy not being able to play with frogs, the boy not being able to play with the dollhouse) by role-playing the boy, mother, father, grandfather, etcetera. At the conclusion of the role-play, students in the audience were asked for suggestions on how the boy could have responded when he became angry. New student volunteers acted out the alternative endings to the story.

❖ *Concluding Discussion and Reflection*

Students were asked to discuss the different resolutions they role-played to the story. Questioning prompts included “how did it feel to play the characters?”, “how did you

feel when you were acting angry?”, etcetera Students were asked if they had any questions or comments they wished to share.

Workshop Six (April 18)

❖ The Object Transformed Warm-up (Boal, 2002, p.161)

Ordinary objects (for example ruler, spoon, skipping rope) were displayed on the floor to students. Students took turns acting out a change in meaning for the object by using it differently or in a different context (for example the ruler becomes a baseball bat and the student portrays this change by acting out a baseball player swinging his “bat”). Students were reminded of the different situations in Mayer’s (1983) *I Was So Mad* and asked to brainstorm situations in their lives where they have become upset. The teacher recorded these on a large piece of chart paper. Once all suggestions had been recorded, students chose one situation to act out. Similar to workshop 3 students volunteered to role-play the selected situation (with teacher prompts). Once the entire situation had been role-played, students from the audience were invited to offer suggestions for alternate resolutions. Students volunteered to enact these resolutions. Multiple sharing situations from the collective list were chosen and the same procedure took place.

❖ Concluding Discussion and Reflection

Students were asked if they had any questions or comments they wished to share.

Workshop Seven (April 19)

❖ Observation Warm-up (Boal, 2002, p.143)

One student volunteered to stand in front of the other students. Students were given twenty seconds to look at the student in order to remember as much as they could

about him or her (for example hair colour, clothing, jewelry, etcetera). After the twenty seconds the volunteer student hid him or herself and the others tried to recall as much information as they could. The student returned and the class analyzed their recollections.

❖ *Corduroy* (Freeman, 1968)

The teacher read the story to the students. At the conclusion of the story students were questioned regarding the different conflicts in the story (for example Lisa's mother not wanting to buy Lisa Corduroy bear, Corduroy losing his important button, making friends with others). Students were then engaged in an Aesthetics of the Oppressed word activity (Boal, 2006) that allowed them to perceive and respond to the idea of losing something important, as in the story when Corduroy lost his very important button. Each student was asked to think of something he or she might have misplaced or lost that was special to them (for example baseball card, toy car, doll). Paper and markers was provided and students were asked to draw a picture of the lost items. Once students had completed the picture, the teacher collected them.

❖ *Concluding Discussion and Reflection*

The teacher asked students to sit in a circle formation and the pictures of the lost objects were placed in the middle of the carpet. Students were invited to look at each other's pictures and share any ideas that came to their mind. Students were asked to share their feelings about their pictures or the pictures of others. They were also asked to share any other questions or comments they had.

Workshop Eight (April 20)

❖ *What has changed Warm-up* (Boal, 2002, p.144)

Students formed two lines facing each other. They turned their backs to each other and changed something about their appearance (for example moved bracelet to other hand, rolled up a pant leg). Partners then faced each other again and tried to discover what had changed.

Corduroy (Freeman, 1968)

Students were reread the story. The teacher explained that today Corduroy came to visit. A stuffed bear was displayed to students. The teacher reminded students that Corduroy had some problems that needed to be helped (for example he has lost his button, he can't go home with Lisa). The teacher asked students to suggest how they might be able to help Corduroy as she used the bear as a puppet and invited the students to brainstorm solutions. While in role as Corduroy (puppet) the teacher invited students to "show Corduroy" or act out how he could solve his problems. Similar to workshop six, students took turns improvising solutions with the puppet Corduroy.

❖ Concluding Discussion and Reflection

Students were asked to discuss how they thought Corduroy felt before and after he had help with his problems. Students were asked to reflect upon how it felt to help someone with a problem. The stuffed bear was left out for students to experiment and play with during their free choice time. Students were asked to share any other questions or comments they had.

Workshop Nine (April 23)

❖ Round of Rhythm and Movement Warm-up (Boal, 2002, p.92)

Students formed a circle. One student entered the middle and became the leader,

creating any movement or noise as strange or creative as he or she wished. All the other students attempted to imitate the leader until the leader chose a person to replace him or her until everyone had a turn.

❖ Students were questioned by the teacher about the book *Corduroy* (Freeman, 1968) as a way of reminding them about the characters and situations that occurred in the story. The teddy bear that represented Corduroy in the previous lesson was shown to the students. The teacher prompted students to think about what might have happened to Corduroy had Lisa not bought him from the department store and taken him home. What might have happened to Corduroy if the night watchman had found him wandering throughout the store? As students brainstormed alternative endings or responses to the story, similar to workshop eight, students were invited to improvise the situations and look for alternative endings or responses. These were role-played.

❖ **Concluding Discussion and Reflection**

Students were asked to comment on their thoughts and feelings through the drama. They were asked to share any other comments or questions they might have.

Workshop Ten (April 24)

❖ **The Orchestra and the Conductor Warm-up (Boal, 2002, p.101)**

Students were given objects or instruments that they may use to create sounds. One student was the conductor. Students could not make their sounds unless instructed to by a wave of the conductor's wand. In this way the conductor created his or her own piece of music.

❖ ***Bunny Cakes* (Wells, 1997)**

The teacher read the story to students. At the conclusion she led them in a discussion about the story's characters and situations (for example Ruby not wanting Max to help, problems with siblings, Max not being able to communicate his thoughts and the grocer not being able to understand Max) through questioning. Large pieces of chart paper were placed on the floor and students were engaged in an Aesthetics of the Oppressed image activity (Boal, 2006) by drawing collective images of how they felt when others did not understand what they said or meant.

- ❖ Students shared their pictures with others and discussed them. Students were asked to share any other comments or questions they might have.

Workshop Eleven (April 25)

- ❖ Music and Dance Warm-up (Boal, 2002, p.108)

A CD with unusual sounds or music was played (for example ocean waves, animal noises, classical music) and students were invited to “dance” to the music using whatever actions and motions as inspired by the music.

- ❖ The teacher reminded students of the story *Bunny Cakes* (Wells, 1997) from the previous workshop. The teacher asked students to brainstorm the problems and issues in the story. As students suggested different situations from the book, the teacher asked them to act in character and represent the original scene and then act out suggestions for alternative responses or resolutions to these situations.

Concluding Discussion and Reflection

- ❖ Students were asked to discuss their feelings trying to communicate with a person that didn't appear to understand what they were saying. Students were asked to

share how they felt when trying to communicate with Max. Any other questions or comments were shared at this time.

Workshop Twelve (April 26)

❖ What is the Object Warm-up (Boal, 2002, p.121)

An object was placed into a large bag without students being aware of what the object was. Each student had a turn reaching into the bag and feeling the object. Students took turns guessing what the object was.

❖ Students were reminded of the situations and conflicts from each of the four books they had explored in workshops one through eleven. Students were then encouraged to share situations from their own lives where they had experienced any issue of concern or conflict. Situations were acted out according to the original retelling. Solutions or alternative actions were suggested by students and acted out.

❖ Concluding Discussion and Reflection

Students were asked how they felt acting in the frozen images. Students were invited to share any other questions or comments at this time.

VITA AUCTORIS

Deanna Marie Pecaski McLennan was born in 1977 and had a happy and fulfilling childhood growing up in Amherstburg, Ontario. She obtained her Honours Bachelor of Arts in Drama in Education (1999), Bachelor of Education in the Primary and Junior Grades (2000), and a Master of Education in Curriculum Studies (2003) from the University of Windsor. Having a passionate interest in pursuing doctoral work and further exploring the use of sociodrama in educational environments, Deanna pursued her Ph.D. while continuing as a full-time elementary teacher for the Greater Essex County District School Board working primarily in the kindergarten grades. Deanna and her husband Trevor have a beautiful baby girl, Cadence Sage, born during Deanna's doctoral journey in 2006.