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Drama and the curriculum

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ABSTRACT

In this article from nearly 40 years ago, Ray Goodlass discusses key issues relating to drama's place in the curriculum. He draws on key theorists and practitioners from the time, including Slade, Way, Heathcote and Courtney, to illustrate major considerations in the arts and drama curriculum design process. Goodlass considers a range of curriculum models, reminding us that it is to our advantage to consider the full range of possibilities.

KEYWORDS

Arts curriculum; drama curriculum; drama in education; curriculum content; curriculum models; Heathcote; Slade

Note from the editor

In the present time of curriculum change and uncertainty, we have chosen to reprint Ray Goodlass' article from the late 1970s as representative of drama curriculum discussion at the time. We contacted Ray to see if he wished to add any comments to the article. He replied, "I won't suggest any additions, for as a period piece it has a ring of the times about it, and as such is best left alone." Looking back at the discourse of the time prompts us to consider both how far we have travelled and what we may have lost sight of, on the way.

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The development of drama in education

Education through art is not a new concept, as Herbert Read pointed out. "It was very explicitly formulated by Plato many centuries ago … it is surely one of the curiosities of history of philosophy that one of the most cherished notions of this great man has never been taken seriously by any of his followers. Schiller alone being an exception. Scholars have played with his thesis as with a toy; they have acknowledged its beauty, its logic, its completeness but never for a moment have they considered its feasibility. They have treated Plato's most passionate ideal as an ideal paradox, only to be understood in the context of a lost civilisation."[1]

It is apparent that in Australian schools the arts are little valued as a basic educational mode. Before this study examines drama in education, it is important to spend a little time examining concepts of knowledge in order to place dramatic education in its context. "Man's

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attempt to encounter his experience of being in the universe is characterised by three major dimensions: The rational logical or *scientific* approach to meaning is the form of enquiry seen as most fundamental to education and learning in western society. The rational thinking will establish *truth* as a value emphatically embedded in all aspects of education. A second continuing aspect of human experiencing has been the attempt to explore *beauty* or aesthetic meaning. Understanding *knowing,* and communicating meaning through other than solely rational thinking processes has permitted statements of meaning of entirely different characteristics. This is also true of the third element of man's enquiry … the ethical, moral, or valuing aspect of his experience."[2]

Australian school curricula have often rejected entirely the third element of inquiry, stating that subjects concerning moral, ethical and valuing issues are inappropriate for educational study. More attention has been paid to the second area, which may be termed the expressive curricula. However it has a secondary and uncertain place, which becomes gradually more secondary and uncertain as students progress from Kindergarten through to Year 12. This isolates one of the major problems facing drama in education; it is regarded as a relatively unimportant arts subject, leading to a low status in the school curriculum.

Another major problem is isolated by Warren Lett: "The key to understanding the expressive curriculum is to be found, not in any particular set of subjects, such as the arts, but through the exploration of the expressive mode of mental activity."[3]

The expressive curriculum is not categorised by subject content, but as behaviour characterised by the imaginative, the intuitive, by sensing and feeling in all its modes, and by the act of communicating these experiences symbolically to others. Drama and the arts face problems in subject curricula because, in the sense described above, they are not subjects.

Drama in education began to develop in the early twentieth century as paediocentric concepts of education began to receive some prominence … "The primary root of all educational activity is in the instinctive, impulsive, attitudes and activities of the child, and not in the presentation and application of external material, whether through the ideas of others or through the senses and that, accordingly, numberless spontaneous activities of children, plays, games, numic efforts … are capable of educational use, nay, are the foundation stones of educational method."[4] As a result, many educators came to experiment with such methods – experimental schools such as Dewey's own Laboratory School; the Porter School in Missouri, where Maree Harvey worked with groups using free dramatisation; and the Dalton School, where much of the girl'"learning by doing" reached its culmination in some form of dramatic activity.

One of the clearest formulations that learning through play could achieve manifestation in drama came from Caldwell Cook, working at the Perse School, Cambridge, where his "play way" approach gave the name to a movement.[5] Previously, dramatic work in schools had tended to be concerned with the production of a play, or the use of simple read dialogue in language lessons. Cook's method was founded on three basic principles:

1. Proficiency and learning come not from reading and listening, but from action, from doing, and from experience.
2. Good work is often the result of spontaneous effort and free interest rather than of compulsion and forced application.
3. The natural means of study in youth is play.[6]

By the 1920's and 1930's many schools ere experimenting with free play, particularly with younger children. In Britain teachers like E. R. Boyce[7] worked in this manner with infants, and in the United States Winifred Ward's book, Creative Dramatics[8] gave its name to a whole movement, which Richard Courtney describes as "basically a combination of the play way, free play, and children's theatre".[9]

Meanwhile, developments in drama had been paralleled in the other arts. The concept of child art enabled teachers to accept that there were important developmental stages that were not like adult art. "And so, the creative arts began to take that place as an essential part of education. Like Rousseau, the creative movement looked at the child as a child. Like Dewey, it say that experience, doing, was an essential element in the process. All was seemingly solved under the all inclusive banner of *self expression*. If the question 'self expression of what?' were asked, workers in the field could … only provide a partial answer."[10]

Some answers were provided after the Second World War, and were largely the work of two teachers, Peter Slade and E. J. Burton. They exemplify the two main and differing ways of looking at drama. Peter Slade postulated that child drama was an art form in its own right, with its own place as a subject within a school.[11] This was a claim that drama was not only a method of teaching, but that it was a separate subject. Slade based his concepts on many years of observation, beginning with the play activities of babies and young children, and distinguishing two forms of play – personal and projected. In personal play the whole person is used in movement and characterisation; there is a tendency towards noises and physical exertion, and the child is acting in a real sense. In projected play, the mind is used more than the body, and the child "projects" an imagined dramatic situation outward onto objects, with great absorption. Slade went on to postulate that drama could offer an emotional catharsis for children, providing them with safety value in that "it offers continual opportunity for playing out evil in a legal framework."[12]

In offering emotional release, drama offers opportunity for emotional control, and thus provides for self-discipline. Slade saw drama as essentially improvisatory, and, in younger children, largely spontaneous. It is not concerned with performance, and only by adolescence do participants think in terms of "end stage presentation", and only then do theatrical elements became significant. Slade's work is important to us here in that it established child drama as an art form because it has its own particular medium, and that the individual achieves growth and development through the art form.

The latter point was developed further by Brian Way, who claimed that drama is not an academic subject, but an experiential way of knowing concerned with the development of children. He places drama in the intuitive mode, claiming that it needs training, just as the intellect does. Consequently it is deserving of a place in the school curriculum, and that, "… the idea of drama being a way of teaching can itself create another confusion by suggesting that drama is a useful tool for teaching other subjects. This is indeed so, but only after drama exists within its own right."[13] However, Way stressed that though drama should have its place in the curriculum, it was not a subject with a content to be learnt – that would be theatre studies.

E. J. Burton, mentioned above, said that dramatic activity was the human being's method of assimilating experience, and was, therefore, basic to all education. More recently, the work of Dorothy Heathcote has emphasised this way of looking at drama. Heathcote has said that what she does is not creative drama, role play, psychodrama or sociodrama (all names that have been used to describe particular uses of drama), but a "… conscious employment of

the elements of drama to educate – to literally bring out what children already know but don't yet know they know."[14]

Mrs Heathcote uses elements of drama (dramatic focus, upgrading of language and a slow pace, for example) to expand the awareness of children, to enable them to look at reality through fantasy, to see below the surface of actions to their meaning. In drama the universal inherent in any moment can be realised. In this sense Heathcote's work is free of drama about whether drama should be subject or method, whether it should lead to theatre study, or is quite separate – for the teacher working in any of these areas may use Heathcote's methods. However, as Mrs Heathcote points out in the film, *Dorothy Heathcote Talks to Teachers*,[15] many see her as being opposed to "creative drama" or "children's theatre", and this has given considerable impetus to drama being used to teach other subjects.

There are, as mentioned above, many particular ways of using drama that have developed – from Moreno's work in psychodrama[16] through particular techniques such as role play, to particular uses to explore problems, such as sociodrama. Many have regarded these elements as a further fragmentation of the drama world, and it is true that they have added some problems to the place of drama in the curriculum. Nonetheless, it remains valid to note that child drama has developed in three main directions: as a subject, as a teaching method, and as a tool in therapy. The next section of this study will look in more detail at what makes drama a distinctive way of knowing.

The nature of drama in education

Drama in Education: if it is a subject, what is its content and how can it be taught? If it is a medium for self-expression, is it accessible to all children and what is being expressed? If it is a method of teaching, what are the methods, and what is it teaching?

There are a number of ways of trying to define the contributions of drama to education. The recently completed (English) Schools' Council Study, *Drama Teaching Project (10-16)*[17] has some valuable evidence, particularly as the conclusions are based on the work of practising teachers.

The project looked at drama teachers' aims, and found considerable overlap in what they were trying to achieve.

"There was a common concern for the development of the child as an individual. There was a commitment to developing powers of imagination through imaginative activity. Teachers were directly interested in correcting an imbalance in educational priorities which emphasised the development of intellectual skills and the transmission of information, apparently at the expense of the child's private life of feeling and personal responses. There was, overall, a concern for the child as a member of the group – that in education we should recognise and cater for the challenges of the child's social development."[18]

The problem of trying to define drama through aims is twofold – these statements of aims add nothing new, and these aims are shared by many other areas across the curriculum.

Content is another way of looking at drama. The School's Council Project found that teachers were using drama to explore an enormous range of content – social themes, historical topics, current events, and concepts. Though the very versatility of drama is a recommendation for its potential across the curriculum, it is of little help in defining drama.

Consequently, to gain further insight it would be wise to look at what actually goes on in drama lessons.

"The essential and recurring feature of all school drama work is that it involves children as participants, projecting into imagined or assumed rules or situation."[19] This, the School's Council team terms *acting out*, regarding it as a more appropriate expression than the commonly used expression "improvisation". Fundamentally, acting out involves people making an imaginative leap from their actual situation or roles into a supposed one. More significantly, acting out involved the participants in accepting a shift in the conventions of behaviour toward each other:

a. There is an agreement to suspend the normal social roles with each other in identifying with the new imagined roles.
b. There is an agreement to make a different use of the environment, including a shift in the conventions of time, indeed the usual conventions of time and space may be suspended during acting out – and, as noted above, Dorothy Heathcote often finds it advantageous to *slow time down*.

It is now necessary to discuss why a class would be acting out a situation.

"The situation was selected because it functioned as a symbol of the conflict in which the group were interested."[20]

The acting out was representing essentially abstract ideas in symbolic form. This enables the group to make the ideas more concrete, and thus to make clearer sense of them, as well as to develop and express an attitude towards them.

"It is in the light of the process of symbolisation – particularly as it applies to the arts – that the function of drama can best be seen."[21]

There is a similarity here between drama, art and language, in that language is not merely communication, but that language we use actually helps to shape what our view of the world is. "Thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them … words play a central part not only in the development of thought but in the historical growth of consciousness as a whole."[22]

Thus the way we symbolise the world affects how we come to understand it. Symbolisation is not confined to drama: in mathematics we confront essentially abstract problems in the physical world.

However, each individual lives in two worlds: "There is a world that exists beyond the individual, a world that exists whether or not he exists. The child needs to know about this world and manage himself in it … it is a world of facts, or public space, and objects … But there is another world which exists only because the individual exists. It is the world of his own sensations and feelings … the world of private space and solitary subject."[23]

If we look at the content and form of the arts we are confronted immediately from this inner world. A primary function of the arts is to make sense of the life of feeling, through expressing and representing problems of subjective understanding in symbolic form. In music, painting, dance and drama we develop languages, symbolic forms, through which we may understand this universe of personal response. Thus, as the Schools' Council Project points out, the arts are much more than recreational and relaxing past times.

"If relaxation were their only purpose then going to sleep would be a much cheaper and less strenuous alternative. The persistent influence of the arts suggests that they may fulfil

a much more basic need. They are the product of a compulsion to make sense of, express, and communicate from the inner world of subjective understanding."[24]

Artistic expression takes many forms and uses many media. To some extent the content of particular art forms is determined by their media – the painter, for example, is concerned with expressing a visual and spatial relationship. Drama is different, in that the media are essentially the body and the voice. But drama also uses movement, light, and sound, as well as time. It revolves around the process of behaviour, through interpersonal response. The individual is the prime medium of expression.

"Acting out, then, is the exploration and representation of meaning using the medium of the whole person."[25]

This makes the content of drama very broad, but also points out that it is not the content which makes drama distinctive, but the way in which it is considered. It is seen from the point of view of those involved, through the lens of human behaviour. It is process-oriented, not content-oriented.

It is the nature of this process that we must examine. There are several aspects to consider. It is a process in time in that an expressive statement through drama only exists in the act of making it. It is a sequence of sounds and silence, movement and stillness, which unfolds and dissolves through time. It exists only in action, and does not linger in space when the action is done.

A drama statement exists in action and develops through interaction. As individuals assume a role or posture, they enter a dialogue. As each one moves or speaks he affects and modifies the actions and behaviour of the others. They change and challenge the contributions of each other; they modify and explore the symbols they are using so they may be drawn nearer to understanding the problems of meaning with which they are concerned. Thus drama is a shared process in that one participant provokes a response from the others. They symbolic situation is developed through this process of interaction so the underlying meaning is explored. Drama revolves around the pooling and sharing of experience in the development of a joint expressive act. The Schools' Council Team has called this the "negotiation of meaning".[26]

The negotiation of meaning takes place on two levels – the real and the symbolic. In real terms the real social network in the group underlies and informs the nature and quality of their involvement. The symbolic negotiation of meaning is concerned with the roles and their interaction. Clearly each level can influence the other, and affect the understanding of the issues.

Many elements of the drama process are also elements of theatre. They both rest on the ability to project into roles and characters. They both use space, time and objects as symbolic media. They both centre on the person as the main medium of expression. The essential difference is that theatre is concerned with performance in that it exists only in communicating with an audience, but drama in education need not, and often does not, have performance as its goal. In the drama class participants are primarily aware of themselves, reacting with and for each other in an open ended, and often uncertain way. Their sense of audience is introspective. If they perform to an external audience there is a shift in emphasis. They would then be dealing with communication, which makes different demands. Drama and theatre are also limited through form. Drama does have a destination, but it is not in the first place performance.

Rather it is the resolution of the problem of meaning which is motivating the work. As the arts tackle problems of understanding through representing them in symbolic forms there is a dialogue between the content of the expression and the form in which it is made. The symbolic form encapsulates the meaning. The symbols chosen critically affect the nature of the understanding the work.

Therefore, "as a group working on an issue in drama struggles to elaborate the form of expression, so they may plumb greater depths in the meaning of the issue, idea, theme, or concept. Similarly new insights and perceptions into the problem or meaning will affect and shape the nature of the emerging form of expressions".[27] Clearly, if a theatrical form will aid the understanding of meaning for the group, then in that particular local context it would be appropriate. Another way of explaining the link between drama and theatre is to note there is a dual search for adequate symbolic forms of representation which will both unearth and represent the problems of meaning. If the representational symbol is found then it could be appropriate to share it with others in performances.

There are two further aspects to consider. The first is that many schools see the techniques and skills of theatre becoming important as the child matures. Secondly, there is the issue of the value of a knowledge of theatre forms by seeing plays in performance.

"We each build our own representation of the world but we greatly affect each other's representation so that much of what we build is in common", explains James Britton.[28] That is, in expressing and communicating perceptions and attitudes through the arts, the individual is contributing to a common pool of shared experience. As the individual finds meaning in personal experience through direct involvement in the arts so the culture, the society of which he is part, challenges and shapes, questions and expresses its corporate personality in its public arts. These public arts provide a structure of perceptions, challenges and questions which feed and nourish the individual's own search for meaning and experience. Thus the teacher does need to ask how the child's involvement in the arts can be enriched and enlivened through experience of the work of others. Generally, the greater the sophistication of the work, the more need there will be to enrich the work through the experience of others. This tends to place an emphasis on theatre arts as children mature, and also poses a problem for school curricula in that children will need to attend theatres, and have performances visit the school.

Finally to the concept of **reflection**.

"The having of the experience itself is not good, if you have not also brought about, through your understanding of it, some kind of digestive process so that you can perceive what it is about. So if we want quality in our schools … we have to bring about reflective processes," notes Dorothy Heathcote.[29]

Whilst this has been adopted in a major way by many teachers there is a problem, intimately concerned with the place of the arts in the curriculum. Many drama lessons have institutionalised reflection by adding discussion on to the end of the lesson.

"I argue that this massive prop should be cut down to size and indeed should only be used in the full recognition that it can be a serious impediment to the drama process itself,"[30] writes Robert Witkin, who argues that discussion, being in the discussive mode, is alien to the drama process, that … "the discussion serves to pull the pupil out of the immediate experience into the world of objective facts in which his own emotional responses figure as objective elements."[31] As Witkin notes, what the pupils parade in these analyses are not their authentic responses but the meanings they choose to give them in the context of analysis.

It is a different kind of projection, exercising a different kind of intelligence. It is not reflection that is in dispute, but the manner in which it is done. It is important to remember that objectives discussion is in a different mode from art, and that a curriculum must not place too great an emphasis on this way of working.

We can state that, rather than a subject or a method, drama is an arts process. It has five main components:

1. Social interaction: pupils interact at real and symbolic levels.
2. Content: drama revolves around problems, questions, and issues of understanding. It is united in that it is seen at the level of human behaviour and interpersonal response.
3. Forms of expression: as participants explore problems of meaning and understanding they are experimenting with different ways of representing through roles and situations they devise.
4. Use of media – the language of drama. The way in which content is explored and the forms of representation which are discovered and used are affected by the participants developing skills in the media of drama.
5. Reflection: perception on the part of the participants of the meaning which has developed through the process.

In defining drama as an arts process it both clarifies and complicates the situation. It can be used to teach concepts in other subjects, but not the facts of them. It is not an academic subject and thus with the other arts it is an uneasy bedfellow in a subject curriculum.

Curriculum models

During the previous century there have been many attempts to structure school curricula, and they have been given a variety of names. Harold Spears categorised curriculum organisation into six types: the subject curriculum, correlated curricula, fused curricula, broad fields curricula, core curricula, and experience or activity curricula.[32] In more recent years others have developed, such as the spiral curriculum. The subject curriculum is the oldest and still the most commonly used form of organising a curriculum. Though perhaps superficially it could be seen as being an appropriate way of organising drama into the curriculum, a closer look shows this not to be the case.

For example, Smith, Stanley and Shores[33] list two distinctive characteristics that set it apart from the other organisational patterns:

1. That the subject matter is classified and organised in accordance with the divisions of labour and research. This implies a direct relationship between the accumulation and classification of knowledge. Since drama does not have an organised content, it must be invalid as a subject under those terms.
2. That the subject curriculum emphasises expository discourse and techniques of explanation. Drama is alien to this mode as it is subjective, concerned with feelings, and functions through the whole person reacting to and with others.

Another problem, pointed out by Hilda Taba[34] is that "one assumption of the organisation is not only that specific subjects cover the important areas of social heritage, but also that the mastery of them takes care of the full scope of education". This means that both

refinements of knowledge and new educational tasks (such as drama) take the form of adding new subjects. Clearly, there are limits to the number of new subjects that can be added. Another problem is that there is a hierarchy of priority among subjects according to this value as mental disciplines, thus leading to concepts of hard and soft options. The arts tend to be regarded as soft options, resulting in them receiving low priority.

In a subject curriculum the body of knowledge and its inherent mental disciplines are the determining factors, and so, "The subject being taught often becomes more important than the student".[35] In drama the child's understanding of meaning is at the centre of the activity.

Thus drama and the subject curriculum are uneasy partners. This has led to conflict and to drama being given a low priority. One advantage of the subject curriculum is that it allows a "time slot" for drama – but this provision of time is not distinctive to the subject curriculum.

Several curriculum plans have come into being as attempts to overcome some of the criticisms and problems of the subject curriculum.

The correlated curriculum is an extension of the subject model. It is an attempt to show relationships between two or more subjects without destroying the subject boundaries. The concept is based on the assumption that an inherent relationship exists between facts, concepts and other aspects of a given subject and similar types of information found in other subjects – for example between literature and the history of the period. Though this scheme may allow drama to be used more advantageously as a teaching method, the correlated curriculum has all the disadvantages of the subject curriculum.

The fused curriculum, an attempt to create a "subject" or course based on the content previously taught in separate units, essentially has the same drawbacks for drama, though it does provide opportunity for integration, content to be learnt is still imposed on the students.

The fourth alternative on the 'curriculum continuum' is the Broadfields curriculum, which emerged as an attempt to bring together content from several subject areas, and then to arrange this content into a broad course. Social studies is a well known local attempt at such a plan. Again the place of drama in such a scheme, which is still based on subjects, would be as in the other curricula described above.

Of all the attempts to break away from the subject curriculum, the core approach has probably attracted the most attention. However, there is in fact some dispute as to what is a core curriculum. One view is that the distinctive feature lies in the emphasis on the present day needs of society. Another idea revolves around the concept of common learnings. The former concept is most interesting for drama. It has the following characteristics:

1. The core curriculum utilises the experience-centred approach to curriculum development.
2. The change of behaviour with which the core is concerned centres on the growth necessary to function as an effective citizen in a democracy.
3. The basic procedure is problem solving.
4. The content is drawn from social and personal problem areas considered as significant plans of general education.
5. The subject matter of the core cuts across subject boundaries.
6. The emphasis on teaching skills is based on needs.

7. The procedure of teacher-pupil planning is used.
8. The provision of co-operative planning by teachers is made possible.
9. The core class is scheduled for a larger block of time than the single period.
10. The guidance function is an integral part of the core.
11. The core class includes pupils of various abilities.[36]

Thus subject matter is used only where it is appropriate. The plan is "child centred", and can be based on experiential learning, both essential elements of the arts. Of all the curricula we have examined, this view of the core curriculum offers the most appropriate system for drama, and, as will be shown when ways of organising drama in the curriculum are examined, it also offers opportunity for integrating the arts.

The second interpretation of the core curriculum does not help the arts so much, in that it is still based on subject content.

"In this curriculum design one subject or group of subjects becomes the core around which all other school subjects are organised … It is more precisely defined in terms of a programme of general education or common learnings under fewer teachers than the separate subject curriculum would require."[37]

The most extreme break with the subject curriculum has been the activity or experience curriculum. It is an older model than many of the others, going back to the experimental work carried out by John Dewey and others around the turn of the century. A complex and often a misunderstood model, it can be summarised as follows:

"The experience curriculum is the one type which definitely turns its back on a subject matter approach. It begins with a philosophy of the learning process, against which all the school's practices must be measured. In short, it sees education as a continuous life process, as the growth of the whole individual in accordance with his environment, and it aims toward a more intelligent participation of that person in his culture. Since his culture or environment is constantly changing, the experience curriculum cannot be a fixed curriculum. Indeed, it is a series of experience situations, each offering possible growth factors and understandings which the learner may carry forward to help him meet future experience situations … the curriculum begins with pupil interests and felt needs, sees growth as coming from purposeful activity, and emphasises the importance of an integrated individual so he may constantly adjust himself to a changing culture."[38]

The curriculum is planned for and by each class as needs and interests arise or are discovered. The plan was quite widely adopted in some primary schools in the past, and continues to be of some influence today – though the difficulties of implementing and carrying through such a curriculum prevent it being a major model. It has not been adopted as a plan in secondary schools. As the activity curriculum is not subject-centred it offers considerable opportunities for the arts, though the major criticism of the system would be of concern to the arts. This is that the felt needs of the class and individuals are influenced by the environment. As our culture places little value on the arts this could be reflected in the curriculum, thus perpetuating the status quo and ultimately leading to a diminished place for the arts.

Newer plans for curriculum organisation offer little help to the arts, in that:

"… the majority of the newer plans … are not attempts to break subject barriers, but rather to strengthen the manner in which the subjects are presented to students".[39]

Thus the nongraded curriculum is concerned with vertical patterns. The Dual-Progress plan could be less rigidly subject centred in that it organises students for part of the day

in a self-contained situation, whilst for the rest of the day they are exposed to teachers of special subjects. One such scheme, developed by Shoddard at New York University,[40] consisted of an area called cultural imperatives which includes social studies and language, taken by one teacher. The rest of the day is devoted to "cultural electives", including mathematics, science, art, music and so on. Providing that drama is offered here, this system offers considerable possibilities in that the electives are nongraded, and offering scope for individual development. In this scheme the arts need not be relegated to a fringe category. However the system was devised for primary schools, and has not been widely adopted in secondary schools.

A relatively new approach, more talked about than practised, is the spiral curriculum. Though linked to a subject base it is of interest to us because it is concerned with disciplinary structures, that is, the assumption that every subject contains certain basic concepts that constitute the basis of a complete understanding of the subject. A further assumption that is of value is that: "… any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development."[41]

This implies that if this system were adopted it would be advantageous to the arts in that they would not be disadvantaged by comparison to adult art forms. It would advance the notion of child drama. However, as the spiral curriculum consists of organising content in terms of levels of complexity it is not appropriate. If the spiral consisted of skills and techniques, rather than content, there would be considerable scope for the arts.

The major conclusion to be drawn from this survey of curriculum models is that a subject-centred curriculum is not appropriate to arts education. In secondary schools a core model would be more apt, or a subject-based model adopted so that the emphasis was not placed on content. This would imply a change in the strict definition of subject.

The knowledge that drama is an arts process, deserving, with the other arts, a major place in the curriculum, could lead to major curriculum changes.

"The approach advocated here cuts across the social barriers which divide the academic from the non-academic. Ultimately it eliminates grades and streaming and tests and examinations because of the way in which the children's artistic activity grows. It makes nonsense of these distinctions. It breaks down the 3,000 years old tyranny of the subject curriculum…" writes Owen.[42]

However, such change is more easily written about than practised. As yet there is no curriculum model that gives the arts their due place, and in the present educational and financial climate this is unlikely. However, there **are** schemes, already implemented, which do considerably modify the subject curriculum in a manner appropriate to the arts. We would do well to examine those models which could facilitate the development of drama education without major curriculum change.

Notes on contributor

Ray Goodlass was president of the Educational Drama Association, NSW in the mid-1970s, and the second NADIE, now Drama Australia, president (1978–1979). Riverina C.A.E. is now part of Charles Sturt University.

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