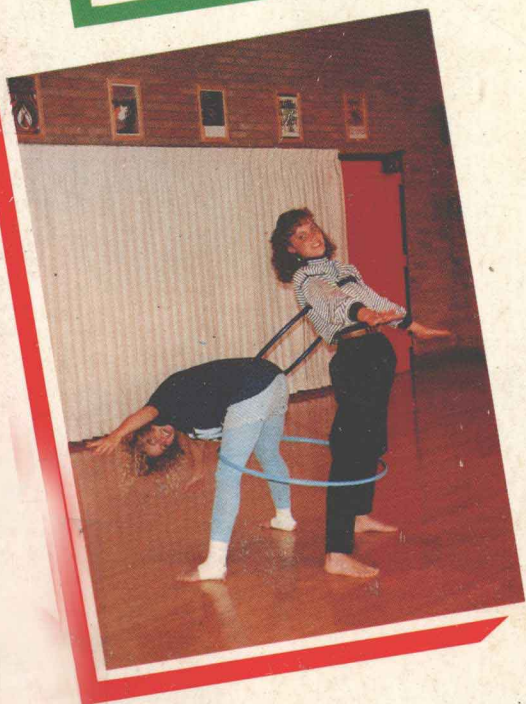




Adventures in Creative Movement Activities

A GUIDE FOR TEACHING

■ Marcia L. Lloyd ■



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A Guide for Teaching

by

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Tingkat 2, Wisma Hong Leong Yamaha,
50, Jalan Penchala, 46050 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia.

First Print 1990

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ISBN 967-914-392-9
010032128-3

Dicetak oleh:
PENCETAKAN DAN PERNIAGAAN BERLIAN SDN. BHD.
110, Jalan Radin Anum 1, Bandar Baru,
Seri Petaling, 57000 Kuala Lumpur.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Special love, thanks, and appreciation go to the following people:

To my husband, Arthur, who stayed at my side offering encouragement and providing invaluable assistance in proofreading and editing the final copy of this book.

To my children, Lisa and Arthur, Jr. for their encouragement, support, and belief in my work.

To all of my students at Idaho State University, ISU Early Learning Center, Cre-Act School, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, and Persatuan Tadika Malaysia, who, over the years have affirmed the value of creative movement and the activities presented in this book.

To Dr. Ling Chu Poh, lecturer at Universiti Malaya, for his assistance and enthusiasm from the day we first met.

I hear and I forget
I see and I remember
I do and I understand

- *Proverb* -

PREFACE

How This Book Came To Be Written

My first visit to Malaysia in 1984 was brief, but it provided a marvellous contact when I met Dr. Ling Chu Poh at Universiti Malaya. He asked if I would be willing to present some music and movement activities to pre-school teachers. I promised that I would.

That opportunity began in September 1987 when I returned to Malaysia on a sabbatical leave from my university in America. I was invited to meet with the board members of *Malaysian Kindergarten Society* (PTM) to discuss opportunities and plans to provide creative movement activities for pre-school teachers.

The meeting that day was exciting and overwhelming. I was excited about the board's acceptance of my ideas, and overwhelmed at the many opportunities the board could make available for me to present creative movement activities. As a result of this meeting, plans for the following activities were developed: (a) a five-week creative dance workshop for a selected group of pre-school teachers, (b) a day-long seminar in creative dance, movement, and music for pre-school personnel (teachers, principals, headmasters, and administrators) sponsored by PTM, (c) three 2-hour presentations for teachers involved in three steps of PTM training (Kuala Lumpur), (d) day-long seminars and presentations of creative dance during the PTM training courses for pre-school teachers (Kota Kinabalu, Sabah), and (e) a day-long seminar for teachers (Kuching, Sarawak).

As I met with various groups of teachers throughout my travels in East and West Malaysia, the need became evident for written materials in the area of creative movement for children. Consequently, I have developed a book that I hope will be useful to pre-school teachers in Malaysia.

A second reason this book has been written is to fulfill a need for materials requested by the B. Ed. students I taught at Universiti Pertanian Malaysia. The students were physical education majors seeking to prepare themselves to teach a variety of activities in secondary schools. The students were eager for written materials that would reinforce the experiences they were learning, and they informed me that no teaching materials concerning creative movement and dance were available for them in Malaysia. I hope that this book will be useful to them.

A third reason for the preparation of this book is to provide activities that the students at teacher training colleges will be able to use in their classrooms. Creative movement activities easily translate to all levels of education. Since these materials are designed for secondary teachers as well as pre-school teachers, primary school teachers will find the materials useful. In fact, many of the lessons and ideas have been used with university students and teacher training students who have enrolled in dance activity classes for their own enjoyment.

This book is designed for teachers of all age groups from pre-school through university who wish to use creative movement activities in the classroom, gymnasium, or on the playground. These methods and

techniques for training students in problem solving and decision making within creative movement activities can also be applied easily to other subject matter as well. The recent curricular revisions from Malaysia's Ministry of Education seem to call for a more creative teacher. Extended classroom time for music, movement, and mime is a new addition to the weekly schedule. This book can be of great assistance in reinforcing this new direction to Malaysia's curricula by providing additional materials for teachers to use in developing and implementing lessons, especially in the areas of music and movement.

Marcia L. Lloyd
May, 1990

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Chapter

1 The First Step

Introduction

Creative movement should be an essential part of all levels of education. It is the basis for exploring our bodies and their capacities in preparation for sports, leisure activities, and healthy living. To the same extent that we want active, creative minds for our students, we should also want these minds to be housed in active, creative bodies.

This chapter presents objectives and values of creative movement and provides information about the content of the book. Also included in this chapter is background information about *enthusiastically* teaching creative movement activities, and a theoretical background for creative movement. Finally, a definition of terms and the role of the teacher in creative movement are presented.

Objectives

The goal to have creative movement as an essential part of the education for children seems to exist in many cultures around the world. And in fact, the teaching of creative movement is frequently associated with the teaching of cultural appreciation. A seminar paper, *Pre-School Curriculum Guidelines for Malaysia*, discussed the rapid growth and development of pre-school education. Nine general objectives and a set of specific objectives for each area were listed in this paper. The ninth general objective, *The Development of Aesthetic Appreciation and Creativity*, stated that:

Children are naturally (basically) creative. During the pre-school years, they are not only able to express their thoughts and feelings effectively through language, but feelings of happiness, anger, sadness, fear and disappointment which they experience can also be expressed through art and craft, music and movement. Given proper guidance by the teacher, these children will be encouraged to demonstrate their imaginativeness and creativity in a variety of ways using a variety of materials.

Specific Objectives

- (a) to express feelings through art and craft, music and movement;
- (b) to experiment using a variety of materials to create something;

- (c) to listen to and enjoy music and to participate in music and movement activities;
- (d) to develop (nurture) creativity through art and craft, music and movement activities;
- (e) to sing and enjoy simple songs;
- (f) to know and appreciate the cultures of diverse ethnic groups in Malaysia (1972, p.12).

Creative movement activities are certainly a way to achieve the objectives listed above.

Values of Creative Movement

Creative movement activities provide many values to the participants. Ayob (1986) conducted a study entitled, "*An Examination of Purpose Concepts in Creative Dance For Children.*" She stated that:

Creative dance for children which deals with the psychomotor, the affective, and the cognitive domains of human learning is of particular value to all children. It promotes the understanding of the communicative and expressive nature of movement. It stimulates divergent and critical thinking, imagination, creativity and problem solving . . . (p. ii).

Ayob (1986) indicated that creative dance not only contributes to general educational values but specifically to the three domains in which children are educated: the cognitive (mind), the psychomotor (body), and the affective (attitudes and appreciation).

An additional value provided by creative movement is that it is a success-oriented activity for everyone.

1. It allows the student to proceed at his or her own rate.
2. The student's solution to the movement problem is accepted by the teacher.
3. It builds a positive self-concept in the student as a result of the first two reasons.

Joyce (1980) suggested that creative movement experiences provide the following:

1. The prime source of feeling and understanding begins with body movement and this makes movement unique among the arts in affording an active experience.
2. Creative movement "*experience teaches children both awareness and control of movement. They use these skills in games, sports, and everyday living*" (pp. 4-5).

3. *"Movement as creative expression plays an important part in life, building self-image, self-awareness, and self-direction" (p. 5).*

Stinson (1988) indicated several values of creative movement experiences for children. She said it *"is concerned with sensory awareness of movement and deep involvement in the experiences"* (p. 4). Developing sensory awareness is a valuable skill for young children to learn, as is the development of kinesthetic awareness (awareness of muscle movement). Stinson (1988) also suggested that creative movement experiences can teach children personal joy and fulfillment through the arts (rather than drugs). She stated that creative movement experiences can help children learn *"... how to find meaning and exhilaration in activities that will nourish them rather than destroy them"* (pp. 8-9).

Other values that creative movement experiences can provide for students and teachers are ways of:

1. creating an overall education by understanding the culture and heritage of self and others,
2. solving complex and difficult problems,
3. developing and enlarging movement vocabulary,
4. providing cognitive learning experiences,
5. assuming responsibility for one's own choices,
6. learning to concentrate and focus attention, and
7. developing awareness of and respect for others.

Content Of The Book

This book is designed to provide school teachers with a specific approach to begin teaching creative movement immediately to their students. The material is intended to be practical, useful, and easy to present.

The sample lessons have been taught successfully to students from various cultures, and the teachers who have tested the ideas contained in the sample lessons have reported immediate success. Also, ways to create, develop, and extend lessons are suggested.

An Enthusiastic Beginning

Teachers do not need to have previous training in physical education or movement-activity experiences in order to succeed in teaching creative movement to their students. What the teacher does need is an "I CAN SUCCEED" attitude and the courage to take the "first step." A philosopher once suggested that a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. The most difficult part of any task or adventure is the beginning. Previous experiences with teachers in various countries have shown that courage and enthusiasm are already present and all that is needed is a way to begin. This book should provide an easy way to begin teaching creative movement and should open many new doors for teachers and their students.

Opening New Doors

As encouragement to teachers new to the concept of teaching creative movement, I want to share one of the experiences I had during one of my teaching assignments in Malaysia. Although this example occurred in Southeast Asia, the experiences have been replicated on numerous occasions with teachers in other countries.

In late 1987, a group of pre-school teachers met in Kuala Lumpur two hours each week for five weeks to learn techniques for teaching creative movement activities. Following each workshop session, the teachers would present that lesson to their students and return to share the results with the workshop group the next week. Only a few of these teachers possessed previous training or experience in dance or physical education; yet, all of the teachers reported a successful experience with their students each week.

All of the teachers were surprised and amazed that even the first creative movement lesson they taught was a success for the students and for themselves. The teachers reported that the students were actually begging for more creative movement experiences. Several teachers reported that during the recess time they had observed the students doing the same movement activity which had been taught that day. In fact, one teacher observed several students grouped together who were creating new movements which they added to the pattern they had learned earlier.

Instant success for the teachers and the students came with their very first movement experience together. All that was needed for successful creative movement experiences was a way to start opening doors to new ideas.

Success, however, does have a formula. Part of the plan for success is provided in this book, and the other part of the plan comes from the courage and enthusiasm of the teacher. This book's contribution to the formula deals with presenting the philosophy and processes of movement and an understanding that creative movement is a success-oriented activity for all of the students. Creative movement activities are based on the students' individual responses being accepted by the teacher. There is no wrong way to move. The only competition is within oneself. There are no losers in creative movement activities. Every student (and every teacher) is a winner with creative movement.

Theoretical Background

■ **Ideas about movement** ■ Fleming (1976) suggested that movement and children are synonymous and that thinking about one without the other is difficult. She stated that "*Movement is a universal language of boys and girls, who use it to express reactions to us, to each other, to their world, to situations, and to things*" (p. 4). Our first form of communication is through movement, even before birth. Each child is a unique individual, however, and has his or her own way of expressing feelings through movement. Therefore, each child should have the opportunity via early school experiences to develop skills in the area of expressing himself or herself through movement.

Human rights seem to be a major topic in the world today. Children, however, are often forgotten when considering the rights of individuals. In response to this void, Fleming (1976) has provided a "*Bill of Rights*" for children. Teachers who have participated in my workshops, seminars, and courses have enthusiastically copied this statement; consequently, I have included the "*Bill of Rights*" in this book.

Bill of Rights

Let me grow as I be
And try to understand why I want to grow like me;
Not like my Mom wants me to be,
Nor like my Dad hopes I'll be
Or my teacher thinks I should be.
Please try to understand and help me grow
Just like me!
(Fleming, 1976, p. 3)

How do we help students grow to be like themselves? Teachers have a tremendous responsibility to help students grow and develop as individuals. Teachers are obligated to offer their students opportunities to create and express themselves, and to accept these offerings from the students.

Developing a program of creative movement activities is not a small task, especially with a classroom full of busy, active students who may have short attention spans and high energy levels that often exceed those of the teacher. This book has been written to assist the teacher in channeling that energy and in developing a creative movement activity program that will offer students opportunities to experience self expression through movement.

Definition of Terms

■ **Creativity** ■ Humphrey (1987) stated that, “The word ‘creative’ derives from the Latin word *creatus*, one meaning of which is ‘produced through imaginative skill’ ” (p. 115). He further stated that “The child should be given sufficient freedom to create his own responses in the situation he faces” (p. 115). He advocates the need for children to be involved in self-expressive activities, such as experimenting with ideas, expressing original ideas, thinking, and reacting. Humphrey (1987) continued by stating that, “Creativity and childhood enjoy a congruous relationship in that children are naturally creative. They pretend. They imagine. They are uninhibited. They are not only original but actually ingenious in their thoughts and actions” (p. 115).

Creativity is an important concept to consider in educating any age group. The child in all of us is full of curiosity and imagination and is uninhibited in movement expressions. These characteristics (curiosity, imagination, and being uninhibited) serve as an excellent foundation for providing creative movement experiences that will assist students in developing the unique individuals that they are.

Everyone possesses a degree of creativity—a unique gift used for self expression. When comparing ourselves with others, though, we may not believe that we are creative. This type of comparison is unfair, however, because each person’s creativity is nurtured and developed in many different ways. When applying the following definition of creativity to ourselves, each one of us will find, though, that he or she has participated in one or more of the aspects listed—concluding that everyone is creative to a certain extent.

Creativity . . . refers to people's behavior when they do such things as (1) invent a new pattern, form, or idea, (2) rearrange already established objects, patterns, or ideas, and (3) integrate a new or borrowed factor into an already established organization. (Murray, 1975, p. 27)

Based on this definition of creativity, and the idea that creativity involves inventiveness and productivity, teachers need to examine the extent of creative experiences being offered in their schools and answer the following questions:

1. What creative experience activities are present in my school and classroom?
2. Are these activities cultivated, nurtured, and encouraged?
3. How are the students being aided in developing creative potential?

Murray (1975) suggested that:

To a child the arts is not play, it is meaningful work. They are ways of saying how he feels and who he is. And if the curiosity and eagerness the arts stir in him are turned off . . . by boredom, lack of involvement, or insensitive adults . . . the fragile structure of ego built upon confidence in his capacity to make judgments, to risk failure, to try and try again until he is satisfied . . . will shrink, hide, and sometimes collapse. It needs support in the form of gentle guidance and respect. (p. 27)

Teachers play a major role in helping students develop creative potential. Helping students explore, discover, and develop the gift of creativity is quite possibly the most exciting adventure upon which a teacher can embark. The following comments provide “food for thought” about creativity, and creative movement:

Creativity is the one type of giftedness that is found to some degree in all students but that is often stifled by the restrictive classroom environments.

Creativity is a natural way of learning. It is both personal and fun and all students can be successful in their own way.

Creativity cannot be left to chance. [Creative movement] can provide the schools the means by which children can succeed, by posing problems with open-ended responses. [Movement] involves little expense for creative experiences because it is self-contained.

Creative [movement] offers the students another way to see themselves as truly unique individuals because there are no ready-made answers on how to feel, see, think, or move their bodies through space.

Students develop their own creative capacities and learn to relate openly and cooperatively with others through the emotional, mental and physical demands of [creative movement].

Creative [movement] requires the students to inquire, think, sense, observe, feel, invent, respond, and to evalu-