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Promoting Drama Activities in Outdoor Environments for Elementary School Children

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This study was undertaken among teachers in different schools of Sweden and among several teachers with experience in teaching drama during February and March 2006. The aim was to explore what the beneficial aspects of working with drama outdoors are and simultaneously to examine any problems that may appear and what kind of activities the teachers believe are more conducive to outdoor settings.

Qualitative research methods were used for this study. An open questionnaire was sent to eight drama teachers for their opinion on doing drama activities in outdoor environments. Also, activities recommended for using in outdoor settings were prepared and sent to several teachers, some of whom had previous experience working outdoors. They were asked later in an open questionnaire to evaluate the relative success of the activities they managed to do and the positive aspects and problems they encountered in doing the activities in outdoor settings. Additionally, some unstructured observations of two different groups took place in two elementary schools.

The research reveals that in general terms, the teachers encountered many beneficial outcomes of using drama activities in outdoor environments and they encountered some problems as well.

This study demonstrates the relative success and benefits of drama activities in outdoor environments and addresses some common problems that may appear. It contains a variety of drama activities that can be useful to teachers who are interested in working with drama in the outdoors. The discussion includes some recommendations for teachers.
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CHAPTER I. LITERATURE REVIEW

The intent of examining the literature for drama and outdoor activities separately is to familiarize the reader with each concept as it relates to this study.

This chapter is divided into three sections:
1. The introduction for this study
2. A brief theoretical framework of drama
3. The significance of outdoor activities for young people

1. Introduction

The existence of many youngsters today has been characterized dramatically by Sue Fenoughty (2002; 28) as

artificial ‘box-like’ existence: going from a box (the home) in a box (the car) to a box (the school), where they are often attached to a box (the computer), then back in the box (the car) to the box (the home) where they spend 2 or 3 hours attached to another box (the television, video or computer).

Thus, as Lorna Cooper has very successfully written in a poem “imagination boxed in with packaged entertainment and conformity”. (Cooper, 1998; 31)

Taking the above statements into consideration, it is very important that we find ways to take young people out of their “boxes”. Outdoor activities are an effective way to accomplish this. In addition, according to Cooper (1998), outdoor activities that involve creative arts such as drama, dance, and sculpture are applied as stimulus for creativity, feelings and personal response.

Moreover, I have seen through my own experience and that of others some of the benefits from doing drama activities in outdoor environments over the past year during my master program of Outdoor Environmental Education and Outdoor Life. A few outdoor activities that we worked with during this master program involved drama in outdoor natural environments. I also recognize the encouragement of Cristel Öfverström, a drama teacher at Linköping University, for this project. As a
teacher she worked many times with drama in outdoor settings with groups of
different ages and she strongly believes in its positive aspects.

Consequently, I am doing this research project as part of my master program in
Outdoor Environmental Education and Outdoor Life in order to examine the
beneficial aspects and problems of working with drama activities in outdoor
environments with young people. This project attempts to provide teachers and
leaders for young people with some practical examples of drama activities
recommended for applying in outdoor settings and to identify their relative success
and benefits.

At this point it is necessary to mention that a study of this nature has not been done,
which establishes the need for research in this area. For this reason, studies indirectly
related to the research problem are included.

2. Theoretical Framework of Drama

2.1. Roots of Drama and Theatre

Early human beings, in attempting to order their universe, explain natural
phenomena, and pray to their gods, used rhythmic movement to express
themselves; this, in time became dance…As danced movement, therefore,
drama is the oldest of the arts. Out of the rites and rituals of dance came
myth: and out of myth, story or plot. It was but a short step from plot to play.
So, theatre began with movement; its origins were closely linked with
religious and magical rites. Gradually, the elements of conflict, character,
plot, and dialogue were added. When this happened, the theatre as an art form
was born. (McCaslin, 2006; 52)

Most familiar is the theatre of ancient Greece, which developed from celebration
and dance into a golden age of theatre. (McCaslin, 2006) Furthermore, there are
many examples through the centuries, nation by nation and culture by culture of the
various ways drama and theatre have been used to inform, inspire, entertain, and teach. (Bolton, 1992) What is more, Aristotle urged education in the arts, distinguishing between activities that were means and those that were ends. (Bolton, 1992)

2.2. Difference between Drama and Theatre

The terms drama and theatre are often used interchangeably, although they have different meanings. The major difference between theatre and drama is that theatre is largely concerned with communication between actors and an audience, whereas drama is largely concerned with experience by the participants, irrespective of any function of communication to an audience. Moreover, theatre is achievable with only a very small minority while there is not a child born anywhere in the world, in any physical or intellectual circumstances or conditions, who cannot do drama. (Way, 1967)

Thus, for the purpose of this study - that is, for the experience by the participants and the beneficial effects from it - the term drama is used.

2.3. What is Drama?

“Aristotle characterized drama as ‘mimesis’”. (Bolton, 1992; 1) The meaning of this was interpreted in different ways. Some have interpreted it as “imitation” of the real world and others have taken the term to mean “representation” or even “metaphor” for what goes on in the world.

Wagner (1979; 16) talks about Dorothy Heathcote’s approach to the term of drama. Heathcote believes that drama is actually “a technique most ordinary people regularly employ as a way of coping with new or unsettling experience”. She explains that when a significant event is coming up, people frequently dramatize it in short beforehand in their minds. This dramatic act helps them explore the feel of the experience and therefore decrease their anxiety and increase their control over it. According to her, people also “use drama to learn to live with and accept an
experience that has been disturbing: an operation, a driving test, a quarrel.” (Wagner, 1979; 16)

Readman and Lamont (1994; 7) refer to drama as “an interactive, living art form which reflects a variety of styles, genres, and approaches.” They claim that the distinguishing characteristic of all drama activity is that it involves the participants adopting role and behaving “as if…” they were someone or something other than themselves. This simple shift in perspective enables them to consider the world from a different viewpoint. They say that people have a natural, inherent ability in role-playing and that drama is concerned with giving artistic form and focus to this ability.

2.4. Drama as a form of game

Some drama educators have taken up the notion of drama as a game, but demote the role of competition, for “neither the social interactions of real life nor of drama are necessarily competitive.” (O’Toole, 1992; 73) In addition, some psychologists have recognized a close relationship between play and the creative process, suggesting that art is actually one aspect of play. (McCaslin, 2006) Also Caillois (2001) considers mimicries (simulation) as one of the four categories of games. The other three are agon (competition), alea (chance) and illinx (vertigo). The basic characteristic of mimicry games, referring to Caillois, is the subject of make believe. These kinds of games enable the participants to become someone else by means of fantasy, imitation or disguise.

2.5. Dramatic Play-the earliest expression in dramatic form

Carl Jung (n.d.)\(^1\) stated that “The dynamic principle of fantasy is play, which belongs also to the child, and as such it appears to be inconsistent with the principle of serious work. But without this playing with fantasy, no creative work has ever yet come to birth. The debt we owe to play of imagination is incalculable” Play is at a lower stage of development than art and through play a child is able to enter

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\(^1\) McCaslin, 2006, p.40
successfully the adult world of the arts and sciences. Richard Courtney (1982)\(^2\) states that “play, initially, and the arts afterwards develop imaginative constructions that help people function in the world.”

According to McCaslin (2006; 7), dramatic play is “the free play of very young children, in which they explore their universe, imitating the actions and character traits of those around them.” Braun, Sutterby and Thornton (web.1) state that dramatic play is an imitation of reality where children create play themes and act them out by participating in various roles. Children are engaged in dramatic play by behaving “as if…” they were someone or something else from themselves and they make up situations and actions that go along with the role they choose. This use of role is a natural, inherent ability of young children and drama is concerned with giving artistic form and focus to this natural ability. (Readman and Lamont, 1994)

Researches suggest that dramatic play can have positive results on children’s cognitive development, learning, peer relationships, and emotional well-being. (Braun, Sutterby and Thornton, web.1)

### 2.6. Development through Drama

According to Way (1967;7) “drama is as intangible as personality itself, and is concerned with developing people.” Therefore, he describes the development of people through drama. At the beginning of drama, each individual is considered to discover and explore his own resources, concentration, the use of the five major senses, imagination, the use, mastery and control of the physical self, the speech or practice of talking, the discovery and control of emotion and the mental power. This happens irrespective of other people. After the mastery of their own resources, people, through drama, discover and explore their environment and other people within that environment. At a later stage, they enrich their resources both within and outside personal environment.

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\(^2\) McCaslin, 2006, p.42
2.7. Drama as a teaching tool and its significance

The use of drama as a teaching tool is not new. Historically, it has long been recognized as a potent means of education and training. (McCaslin, 2006) “Over the last generation, many strong and valid arguments have been put forward as to the philosophical reasons for using drama as education and there have been official white papers pointing out its importance and significance.” (Way; 1967; 2)

McCaslin (2006) comments that nowadays television and video games have turned children into passive recipients of experience. Therefore, she says, it is very important to make opportunities available for children to experience participation in the arts. Drama, since it involves physical, mental, emotional and social abilities of the participants, is an ideal form for this participation. Whether applied in the classroom, the camp, or the community program, drama can be regarded as a way of learning, a means of self-expression, a therapeutic technique, a social activity or an art form. “Drama is the most completely personal, as well as the most highly socialized art form we have.” (McCaslin, 2006; 19)

Unquestionably, drama and modern education share many of their objectives such as creativity and aesthetic development, the ability to think critically, social growth and the ability to work cooperatively with others, improved communication skills, the development of moral and spiritual values, self knowledge, and understanding and appreciation of the cultural backgrounds and values of others. (McCaslin, 2006)

Moreover, according to Way (1967), drama is closely linked in the practical implementation of both the spirit and substance of every Education Act that has ever been passed, especially the idea of the development of the whole person. He also claims that where education is concerned with individuals, drama is concerned with the individuality of individuals and additionally encourages originality and deeply personal aspirations and this is important to the full development of personality.

Referring to McCaslin (2006) drama as a tool for teaching can be used either as an art in its own right or as a learning medium to teach other subjects. When drama is taught as an art form, the aesthetic and intrinsic aspects are emphasized since great
importance is given at the product and the child as artist. Emphasis is also given on sensory experiences, insight and on deepening of feelings and thought rather than on cognitive learning.

On the other hand, drama can be employed as a specific teaching technique, as a learning medium to teach other subjects. This kind of drama activities have been defined as “Drama-in-Education”. The difference is that in this case the goals are more extrinsic such as to transmit knowledge, to solve problems or to change attitudes. By employing drama in this way, the teacher helps students to see below the surface of an event or topic and therefore gain a better understanding of it. The possibilities for that are endless and may come from any area of the curriculum. Possible topics for applying drama as a learning medium might be the study of a particular community, an industry, pollution, transportation, and a disaster with great social implications or a well-known person. (McCaslin, 2006)

According to Way (1993), a particular value of drama as a teaching tool is that it is an experiential way of learning. He gives as an example the two different ways in replying to the question “What is a blind person?” Referring to drama, the answer would be “Close your eyes and, keeping them closed all the time, try to find your way out of this room”. On the other hand, the answer, in the form of information, could be “A blind person is a person who cannot see.” The difference between the two answers is that the first one leads the inquirer to moments of direct experience going beyond simple knowledge, enriching the imagination, possibly touching both the mind and the heart while the second academic answer satisfies the mind by accurate and concise information.

According to Wagner (1979; 15), Dorothy Heathcote as an expert on improvisation in drama, uses drama to “expand children’s awareness, to enable them to look at reality through fantasy, to see below the surface of actions to their meanings. She is interested, not in making plays with children, but in, as she terms it, burnishing children through the play. She does this not by heaping more information on them but by enabling them to use what they already know.” Moreover, Dorothy Heathcote has used drama in almost all areas of the curriculum. For example, for teaching a
foreign language she recognizes its great value in building confidence and reasons for talking. (Wagner, 1979)

Dramatizing literature is also another way of employing drama in education and it can have many beneficial results. Through dramatizing a story, children are supposed to examine it more closely and improve their comprehension and understanding. In addition, they can examine life from various viewpoints by pretending to be different characters. Moreover, when literature from other cultures and times is introduced, children gain global and historical perspectives. As a result, dramatizing literature provides students with an effective and pleasurable way of exploring both themselves and the world. (Heining, 1993)

Cooper (1998) examines drama from the perspective that it draws on real-life situations and therefore it can be a powerful way of exploring environmental issues. He claims that through drama, young people have the opportunity to examine a situation from another person’s point of view. Cooper suggests two case studies of using drama in this direction. The first one concentrates on how drama can be used in outdoor education to bring an environmental issue alive through a conflict of issues. The second case study uses a drama approach to explore environmental concepts through personal and group reflection rather than through a conflict of issues.

2.8. Where can drama take place?

Way (1993) recommends a non-artificial environment for drama to take place and claims that there is really only one totally wrong environment for drama activities which is the stage, raised up at one end of a large room or hall. “This particular environment involves an immediate awareness of out there—a single direction of playing.” (Way, 1993; 269)

The most common environments that most drama teachers recommend are a large hall or a drama room. Besides, the school classroom is one of the most common places that drama occurs. Readman and Lamont (1994) state that the nature of drama taking place in a hall is different to the drama that takes place in the classroom since children always respond differently in an empty space. A large hall can encourage
energetic movement or in some cases it can make some children feel nervous. Moreover, McCaslin (2006) says that classes in drama that require movement are most successful when taught in a large room where there is much space for children to move freely. She doesn’t recommend the use of a too large, unconfined area such as a gymnasium or a playground since that could lead to chaos and she suggests the establishment and maintenance of boundaries.

On the other hand, Kim Davis (web.2), claims that although traditionally, artistic or creative activities such as painting, drama, dress up have been considered indoor events, they can be done just as pleasantly outdoors. She says that this fact would add interest and variety to lessons for everyone involved. Additionally, McCaslin (2006) claims that some of the more innovative uses of creative drama beyond the classroom could be produced anywhere. Some of the alternative spaces she introduces include museums, parks, libraries, camps, community centers, historical venues and the streets of the city.

3. The significance of Outdoor Activities for Young People

Cooper (1998) states that nowadays with the rapid development of technology, we are facing an inward-looking society dependent on technological achievements such as television and computer. As a result, according to William Doherty (n.d) 3, over the last twenty years, there has been 25 per cent decline in the time children spend playing and a 50 per cent decline in time spend in outdoor activities.

Thus, nowadays more than ever, outdoor activities need to be promoted. This section is divided into three parts: The first part gives arguments for the importance of being out-of-doors. The second part deals with young children’s dramatic play in outdoor environments and its value and the third part presents a brief framework on outdoor education.

3 Pica, web.3
3.1. The importance of being “Out-of-doors”

3.1.1. Outdoors: Children’s Natural Environment

According to Friedrich Froebel (n.d.)⁴, the founder of the kindergarten system, “children are like growing plants in a garden, to be cultivated according to the laws of their own being, of God and of Nature.” Many authorities believe that because of humans’ evolution in the natural world, people possess nature-based genetic coding and instincts. Therefore, children are born with a natural, innate sense of relatedness to nature. (Barrows 1995, Lewis 1996, Nelson 1993, Sobel 1996, Tilbury 1996, Wilson 1993 & 1997)⁵. This natural sense of self in relation to the natural world has been termed as “ecopsychological self” and according to Phenice & Griffore (2003)⁵, it is important to help children discover this part of their self. Referring to Mary Rivkin (n.d.)⁶, there is a link between humans and the outdoors that can not be replaced; it can only be atrophied by technology.

3.1.2. Aesthetic and Sensory Experiences

The value of the aesthetic development promoted by being outside can’t be underestimated. David Ingvar, a brain scientist says in Grönvall (1990)⁷ that outdoors our brains are stimulated by different sounds, colors and shapes that nature offers and therefore it is necessary for people to spend time outdoors. “The natural world is filled with beautiful sights, sounds and textures and therefore it is a perfect resource for the development of aesthetics in young people. Aesthetic awareness refers to a heightened sensitivity to the beauty around us.” (Pica, web.3) Carson (n.d.)⁸ claimed that when introducing a child in the excitement of the natural world, “it is not half important to know as to feel.” Young people learn much through their senses, and the outdoors is a virtual wonderland for the senses. There are different and incredible things for the children to see (animals, birds, and green leafy plants), to hear (birdsongs, the wind rustling through the leaves), to smell (flowers and the rain-

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⁴ Fenoughty, 2002, p.28  
⁵ White, web.4  
⁶ Pica, web.3  
⁷ Dahlgren and Szczepanski, 1998, p.18  
⁸ Cornell, 1998, p.8
soaked ground), to touch (a fuzzy caterpillar or the bark of a tree), and even to taste (newly fallen snow, a raindrop, or a freshly picked blueberry). (Pica, web.3) Cornell (1998; 9) suggests that using nature can “stimulate joyful, enlightening insights and experiences”.

3.1.3. Environmental Awareness - Sustainable Development

In Lindberg, Mitt and Åman (1991) suggests that spending time in nature is the best way for children to “learn to love and appreciate” it which he believes is very essential. According to Higgins (2002), being in the outdoors, children gain a greater appreciation for the environment. Direct and positive experiences in the outdoors result in environmental awareness and understanding. They are essential to understanding of our dependence on the natural environment and the effects of human exploitation of natural resources. This awareness will result in active citizenship and adaptation of sustainable living.

Environmental awareness is definitely connected with feelings. (Cooper, 1998) The more personal children’s experience with nature, the more environmentally concerned and active children are likely to become. (Bunting & Cousins 1985, Harvey 1989). And that, referring to Wilson (1994 & 1996), is because young children tend to develop emotional attachments to what is familiar and comfortable to them. Regular positive interactions within nature help children develop respect and a caring attitude for the environment. John Fowles (n.d.) argues that regarding to facts, people know enough now; what is still missing is their emotional and aesthetic relationship. Added to this, referring to Anita Olds (n.d.) "there's no way that we can help children to learn to love and preserve this planet, if we don't give them direct experiences with the miracles and blessings of nature."

3.1.4. Physical Health

Outdoor activities can undoubtedly contribute to improved physical fitness and better health of those involved. In addition, being in outdoor environments can offer

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9 White, web.4
10 Cooper, 1998, p.58
11 White, web.5
tranquility and inner peace to young people. (Hammerman et al., 2001) Many authors and researches indicate that the natural environment has positive effects on the well-being of people, including better psychological well-being, superior cognitive functioning, fewer physical ailments and speedier recovery from illness. Children who play regularly in natural environments show more advanced motor fitness, including coordination, balance and agility, and they are sick less often. (Fjortoft 2001 and Grahn et al., 1997) Nature buffers the impact of life stress on children and helps them deal with adversity. According to Wells (2002), the greater the amount of nature exposure is, the greater the benefits. Szczepanski (2002) claims that recent studies point to evidence that more dynamic learning environments and daily physical activity promote health and prevent diseases such as diabetes, obesity, bone-weakness and stress syndrome (caused by high levels of stress hormones, because of the impact of the learning environment).

3.1.5. More space for movement

As movement is central to children’s development and learning, they definitely need space to move. According to Bates (1996), “outdoors seems the most natural place to ensure children have plenty of space. Even if the outdoor area is small the sheer ‘feel’ of being outside makes it seem larger.” Moreover, Bilton states that outdoor environments, in contrast with indoor can offer larger space for children to move freely, to move so that they can use their whole bodies in imaginative and fantasy play situations. (Bilton, 2002)

3.1.6. Children’s behavior when being outdoors

It is generally accepted that the environment affects children’s behavior in different ways. Bilton (2002) gives two examples of children’s change of behavior when they were outdoors to play. The children were observed by some students on teaching practice in nursery schools. One child was a boy who, according to the students’ comments, was almost two children depending on the environment. Indoors he was shy and reserved but when he went outdoors he became much more outgoing and

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12 Bilton, 2002, p.5
confident in his approach. The other child was a girl, whose play behavior was very different when outdoors comparing with indoors. Inside the classroom, she tended to involve herself in adult-controlled activities and rarely played or chatted to other children. On the other hand when being outdoors, she entered into imaginative games with other children such as mother and baby scenarios, house parties and so on.

According to the students’ comments on the behavior of those two children, the two children became more confident and keener to play with other children when being outdoors. They were giving different messages about themselves in the two environments and that is possibly because they were reading different expectations from adults of indoor comparing with outdoors. They were reading the adult expectation of indoors as being quiet and busy, whereas outdoors they were feeling freer to express themselves since they were feeling that they get away from adults and they could control the territory more. The adults didn’t express these ideas openly, but they were suggested implicitly and as children want to please others and to be accepted and praised, they try to fit in with the system. The change of the children’s behavior could also be due to the open space and the freedom they feel in it. (Bilton, 2002)

Consequently, some children may prefer to play outdoors and some children’s play and behavior may be different when outdoors compared to when indoors—they become more interested, more assertive, less inhibited or can concentrate more easily. This is so for both boys and girls but seems mainly relevant for boys, who tend to want to play outdoors and who are more physically active, more keen to learn through exploration and interested in exploring superhero roles. Henniger (1993/94) looking into preschool children’s behavior in the indoor and outdoor settings concluded that the indoor environment may inhibit some children socially. He found that the dramatic play of boys and older children was strongly influenced by the outdoor environment where both groups engaged in more play of this type. He felt that the reason for that was probably the limitation of space, floor covering and allowable noise levels of indoors.

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13 Bilton, 2002
3.2. Young Children’s Dramatic Play in Outdoor Environments

While there has been no research done on drama in the outdoors, there are several research studies that have addressed dramatic play (the earliest expression in dramatic form) in outdoor environments. A study by Whitehurst (2001) found that pretend play was the most dominant form of play outside followed by enthusiasm, attention and persistence. Social skills and self-esteem were in greatest evidence outside. Also, Frost and Campbell (1985) found that children aged four to six preferred an environment which encourages dramatic play. Moreover, some of the findings of a research made on primary school playgrounds during groups of Primary B. Ed. teacher trainees at De Montfort University during their research in school playgrounds “have discovered that the playground is a richly intertextual and creative site where children play out narratives of their own devising” like for example role playing of “mums and dads”, “have become aware of the existence of oral and multiple literacies outside the classroom and of the vitality and control that children have when they absorb these into their own narrative creations. Also, when they have completed their research almost all seem to have developed new insights on applying children’s expertise outside the classroom to their literacy practices within the school. (web. 6)  

Bilton (2002) says that it is important for children to participate in dramatic play in outdoor environments. It gives them the opportunity to be in role and play imaginatively. And this because there is a greater sense of freedom in the outdoors and more space and noise is more easily dissipated outside. Braun, Sutterby and Thornton (web.1) express the same idea by saying that the difference with the outdoor fantasy (in contrary with imaginative play area inside) is that there is much more scope for movement and the play can be on a larger scale and involve the whole child.
3.3. Outdoor Education

3.3.1. Historical Background

The idea of learning outside the classroom is not new. Learning from direct experience was the traditional and usual way of passing on human culture from one generation to the next long before schools, textbooks or professional educators ever existed. Elements of a philosophical basis for outdoor education can be found in ancient philosophers such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Comenius. (Hammerman et al., 2001) Rousseau (n.d.)\(^{14}\) claimed that “our first teachers are our feet, hands and our eyes. To substitute books for all these … is but to teach us to use the reason of others” Pestalozzi (n.d.)\(^{14}\) made use of experiential learning on his farm-home school for boys and girls. Also, according to Comenius (n.d.)\(^{15}\), “it is necessary to educate the mind, the tongue, the heart and the hand; therefore the most important experiences are the ones achieved by one’s own senses”. Dahlgren and Szczepanski (1998; 11) state that “the educational historical roots of outdoor education may be found among the Ionic natural philosophers that preceded Plato and Aristotle.”

3.3.2. What is Outdoor Education?

Outdoor education is identified by The European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning as covering three areas: outdoor activities, environmental education and personal and social development. (Higgins and Nicol, 2002) The outdoor activities aim towards giving direct experiences to the participants and they are selected as being appropriate for the particular group for the particular time. Also, outdoor education programs encourage participants to develop respect for the environment. Moreover, outdoor education has the intention to stimulate personal and social development. The three key objectives in this respect are the development of self-esteem, self-awareness and inter-personal relationships. (Higgins and Nicol, 2002)

\(^{14}\) Hammerman et al., 2001, p.1
\(^{15}\) Martin, Franc and Zounkova, 2004, p.4
Additionally, Lund (2002)\textsuperscript{16} says that outdoor education is an experiential method of learning with the use of all senses. Experiential learning is based on the premise that the learner learns best by doing. Dewey (1916)\textsuperscript{17} understood the importance of experiential learning. He stated that “learning should be concrete and that it should be as ‘unscholastic’ as possible.” He advised teachers who want experiential learning for their students to “call to mind the kinds of situations that occur outside the school.” As a result of this experiential process, participants should take increased responsibility for their own learning, and consequently develop increased confidence in their own judgment and ability to direct their lives. (Higgins and Nicol, 2002)

### 3.3.3. Types of Outdoor education

Cooper (1998) indicates some of the most important types of outdoor education: 1) adventure education which mostly relates to the development of physical skills, 2) field studies which are usually related to subjects such as geography or science as part of the curriculum, 3) problem solving which is basically used to develop specific personal or team skills, 4) aesthetics and environmental awareness for stimulation of feelings and personal response and 5) practical conservation which emphasizes learning practical skills to carry out a project to improve the environment.

### 3.3.4. Authentic Activities in Authentic Environments

The concept of outdoor education suggests the idea of “a sense of place”, of selecting an appropriate place for each educational purpose where students get firsthand, direct experiences. (Higgins and Nicol, 2002) “Comenius (n.d.)\textsuperscript{18} recommended the use of an authentic environment when choosing and mediating the educational substance” According to Hammerman et al. (2001; 21), “the outdoors abounds with areas appropriate for extending the classroom. Beginning just beyond the schoolhouse door and extending for miles in all directions, these unique learning laboratories have no equal” In addition, Szczepanski states that places create activities and that is a great motivation for using outdoor environments for education. He also suggests that in

\textsuperscript{16} Neill, web.7
\textsuperscript{17} Burriss and Boyd, 2005, p.102
\textsuperscript{18} Dahlgren and Szczepanski, 1998, p.17
authentic environments and through authentic activities, learning becomes more alive, practical knowledge is mastered and better learning outcomes are achieved. (Szczepanski, 2002)

Introducing outdoor education in learning environments does not necessarily suggest that it is a better form of education than class-based learning but that some learning is better suited out-of-doors and teachers should take advantage of the possibilities that outdoors can offer. According to Hammerman et al. (2001; 14), a basic principle of outdoor education is that one should “teach outdoors that which can best be taught outdoors, and teach indoors that which can best be taught indoors.”

3.3.5. Creativity and Imagination

Referring to Moore & Wong (1997; 197) proponents of outdoor education advocate seeing “the out-of doors as a potential space of creativity and imagination” Also, according to Burriss and Boyd (2005; 52) it is clear that “the open nature of the outdoor classroom nurtures spontaneity, flexibility and free expression”. Frequently, it is such nontraditional school experiences that motivate, inspire, and initiate students’ creativity. (Burriss and Boyd, 2005)

3.3.6. A creative approach in outdoor and experiential programs

Doughty (1991) pointed out that a more holistic approach in outdoor and experiential programs was necessary which would balance physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects of personal development. Also Burnard (1991) suggested the use of experiential learning methods involving role-play, drama and structured group activities in the development of interpersonal skills.

Empowered by the Greek ideal of kalokagathia, a harmonious development of body and soul, the Czechs created a unique approach to experiential education-an unusual school founded on a holistic principle. (Martin, Franc and Zounkova, 2004)

Referring to Holec (1994) since 1977, a holistic approach to experiential education

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19 Burriss and Boyd, 2005, p.110
20 Martin, Leberman and Neill, web.8
has been in place at Vacation School Lipnice (VSL) in the Czech Republic. In 1991, VSL became an associate member of Outward Bound and a full member in 1997 (Outward Bound Czech Republic). According to Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe (1988), in OBCZ a method of course design, "dramaturgy," was developed which facilitates this holistic approach by integrating a range of social, creative, and emotional/reflection activities together with physical activities (the last were traditionally the main focus of Outward Bound courses).

Dramaturgy is actually a method used to plan, select and then order the activities with the goal of maximizing the course effects. (Martin, Franc and Zounkova, 2004) As a sequence, “a range of non-physical, structured and non-structured group activities, incorporating aspects of art, drama, music, poetry, role-play and storytelling, have been used in the development of adventure programs, particularly in reviewing activities”. (Martin, Franc and Zounkova, 2004; 16)

21 Martin, web.9
CHAPTER II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter there are presented the main goals, the research questions and the methods being applied for this research.

1. Aims of the present study

1.1. Main goals

The present study is designed to suggest some drama activities suitable for applying in outdoor environments and to examine their effect on young people: the positive aspects of using outdoor environments for applying these activities and any problems that may appear. Additionally, this study aims to investigate what teachers with experience in teaching drama believe about using drama activities in outdoor settings.

This research, by involving the suggested drama activities, the evaluation of doing some of them in outdoor settings and the opinions of proper people about it is valuable to teachers and generally leaders of young people who are interested in working outdoors with young people in a creative way using drama activities.

1.2. Research Questions

The central research question in this study is:

Are there any beneficial aspects of doing drama activities in outdoor environments?

Moreover, other research questions that are also addressed are:

Are there any problems that arise from applying drama activities outside the classroom?

Are there some kinds of drama activities that are better applied in outdoor settings?
2. Methods

2.1. Subjects/Participants

In this research, at first stage 10 Swedish primary school teachers from several schools in Sweden were selected to participate. The basic criteria for this selection were: 1. their involvement in leading groups in outdoor environments and 2. their occupation with primary school students. The names of those teachers were taken from lists of students at Linköping University who either attended (or currently attending) the master course of “Outdoor Environmental Education and Outdoor Life” or just took a 5 or 10 point course in Outdoor Education but only those who currently work in primary schools and have possibilities of working with students outdoors were selected. The research was open for any other teachers who could fulfill the above criteria. As a result five more teachers were recommended by the first teachers selected and they were asked to participate in the research as well. Finally, eleven teachers completed the research.

Moreover, eight teachers with experience in teaching drama were also involved in this research. Those teachers were selected according to their knowledge and experience in drama and they were found appropriate for the research. Four of them work as drama teachers in Universities, one is a primary school teacher with specialization in drama in education and the other three are drama teachers in high schools.

Furthermore, two classes in two different schools were chosen for observation while they were doing drama activities in outdoor settings leaded by teachers that were participating in the research. In both classes the students were 6-7 years old.

2.2. Procedure

The drama activities recommended for outdoor settings were designed with some ideas taken from drama books. After the preparation of the activities, they were sent by email to the teachers who had been informed for the research before by telephone.
conversation and accepted to participate in the research. They were given more or less one month and a half (from the middle of February until the end of March with some extensions) to try and do as many activities of those as possible and they were told that they would be asked at the end of March to evaluate the successfulness of the activities they did. In the meanwhile, telephone and email contact with them was kept.

Additionally, two classes in two different schools were planned to be observed while doing some of the activities with two of the teachers who were participating in the research. The teachers were asked beforehand whether they could lead some of the activities in a specific period of time and the dates were set.

Moreover, for more qualitative results in the research some teachers with experience in teaching drama were questioned for their opinion in doing drama activities in outdoor settings.

2.3. Measures

Concerning the aims of this study, several qualitative methods were used in the research and they are described below. Open ended, written response questionnaires were used as a qualitative method of obtaining information from participants. Several researchers recommended open questionnaires for research that seeks to explore opinions. (Bell, 2005)

2.3.1. Opinion questionnaire to teachers with experience in teaching drama

An open questionnaire was sent to teachers with experience in teaching drama regarding their opinions about using drama activities in outdoor environments. The questionnaire included three questions. First the teachers were asked whether they have ever used drama activities in outdoor environments and if yes, what kind of activities, where and what the reason was for applying them in an outdoor setting. They were also asked whether they noticed any difference in children’s behavior when they were participating in drama activities in outdoor environments comparing with indoor environments. The second question required their opinion on what the
benefits are of applying drama activities in outdoor environments, whether they think there are any problems and if yes, what kind of problems. For the last question the teachers had to give their opinion whether some drama activities are better applied in outdoor environments and if yes what kind of drama activities and why.

2.3.2. Follow-up questionnaire to teachers for evaluating the activities

A follow-up questionnaire was sent to teachers allowing them to openly describe and explain their work with the activities and the effects they had on children. This also allowed them to express their opinions about applying drama activities in outdoor settings.

On 19th of March, the questionnaire was sent to the teachers and it was in two parts. The first part was consisted of six questions for each activity the teachers did and the second part included two questions in reference to all the activities. The teachers were also asked to write the type of school they work in for example nature school, free school and so on. For the first part of the questionnaire the teachers were asked to write the name for each activity they did and describe if they used any variation of it, the age and number of the children they worked with and the setting in which the activity took place. Then, they were required to evaluate whether the activity was successful and explain the reasons for that. Moreover, they were asked to explain what the beneficial/positive effects were from doing the activity in an outdoor environment, whether they encountered any problems and what the children’s reactions were. Regarding the second part of the questionnaire, the teachers were asked whether they had any comments or recommendations for the activities and what was their overall opinion about drama activities in outdoor environments.

2.3.3. Observation

For this research some kind of observation was also used as a data collection method. Two groups in two different schools were observed, both with six and seven year old students. The observations made were unstructured and informal. The basic objective was to observe the successful of the activities, the reactions of the children,
the organization of the activity and whether being in an outdoor environment enhanced the activity in any way.
CHAPTER III. RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter was to present the results of the research methods been applied. The results highlighted the teachers’ opinions on the beneficial aspects and the problems that may occur when drama activities are applied in outdoor environments. The chapter has been divided into the following sections:

1. Results from teachers with experience in teaching drama
   1.1. Answers of the teachers with experience in teaching drama
   1.2. Summary
2. Results from elementary school teachers regarding the activities they did
   2.1. Answers of the teachers regarding the activities they did
   2.2. Summary
3. Answers from teachers in reference to all the activities
   3.1. Teachers’ comments and recommendations for the activities
   3.2. Teachers’ overall opinion on doing drama activities in outdoor environments
4. Observations of drama activities been done in outdoor settings in two elementary schools.

1. Results from teachers with experience in teaching drama

For the present research 8 drama teachers were questioned for their opinion on applying drama activities in outdoor environments. The answers of each teacher are presented separately apart from the case of two teachers who wrote their answers together (except for their previous experience in doing drama in outdoor settings).

Accordingly, their answers are presented in the following four groups: a) Their previous experience in doing drama activities in outdoor settings and the participants’ reactions, b) Their opinion on the beneficial aspects of doing drama activities in outdoor settings, c) Their opinion on the kinds of drama activities that
are better applied outdoors and d) Their opinion on the problems that may occur from that.

1.1. Answers of the teachers with experience in teaching drama

Case I
a) Previous experience: One of the University drama teachers worked with drama outdoors many times (mostly enacting several stories in outdoor environments) and with different age groups. As for the reactions of the students that she received, she mentions a case of a child who, after participating in drama taking place in an outdoor environment, came home and said to his mother: “We were wild today at school!” Another time she experienced some students insisting to go out for enacting the myth “Odipodus” despite it was raining just because they thought that it would be better doing it outdoors.

b) Beneficial aspects: She is very positive in using drama activities outdoors for several reasons. One of the most important reasons for that is the use of senses. Moreover, she talks about the nonverbal communication and the feelings that can be created outdoors. “Outdoors, where you can listen to nature, people talk more easily about feelings.” In addition, she says that drama activities can be more creative outdoors since being in outdoor environments “takes students out of the ‘narrow’ context of the classroom”. Nature stimulates peoples’ imaginations as they can use several things from nature to create their drama. Also, being in outdoor environments “brings people more in the same level” and that is very important for drama as it is a group art.

c) Kinds of drama activities better applied outdoors: In her mind, you can use all kinds of drama activities outdoors since you “decide to have a concept of drama in an outdoor environment”. Any drama activity that can be done indoors can also be done outdoors as far as the teacher decides that the specific activity is better done outdoors.

d) Problems: According to her, there are no problems in doing drama activities in outdoor settings. She says that “it depends on the leader and on the group of people”
Case II
Two other university teachers combined their discussion about the benefits of doing drama activities in outdoor settings, the kinds of drama activities that are better applied outdoors and the problems that may occur from that and brought the same arguments on these subjects. Regarding the first question for their experience in doing drama activities in outdoor settings they replied separately as they have different experiences.

a) Previous experience:
One of them says that he used drama exercises in the purest meaning of the word (action) “connected to group development– ice breakers, presentation exercises, trust games and cooperation exercises” and he worked with both children and adults. He comments that he has experienced the children as livelier outdoors and he has also gotten many positive verbal reactions from adults when they have been outdoors. From his experience, he thinks that “the setting plays a big role in the group behavior”. He continues by saying that “our earlier experiences of how the environment is used, gives us clues on how to act when we are set there again. Our feelings towards earlier activities we have done also have an impact on our behavior.” He brings the example that if we have “drama in a football field or in a gymnasium the participants’ earlier experiences of sports will play a role in how the teacher can connect to them, how they interact and how they feel about the activities (at least in the beginning)”. He suggests that teachers can do an “important job when they show participants how one environment can be used in different ways, and they can broaden the person’s perception on one environment”.

The other drama teacher says that she worked with drama outdoors only with adult students and not with children. They enacted fairy tales outdoors where the students have “used nature for inspiration”. In these cases they had gotten the instructions indoors and then they went out to find a place where they could create characters of.
trolls, elves and goblins that belong to this environment. As she says, “the audience felt that it was easier to believe in the act and the actors felt that it was easier to find their role in the authentic environment”. Another activity she did was to let the students go blind folded with a friend for an hour to experience the nature through other senses than the sight.

b) **Beneficial aspects:** Both of them think that the environment can influence the experience. They claim that “if you change the environment you will change the experience” and “this will broaden the learning”. They continue expressing their thoughts that “the weather and the climate can give the group different moods and feelings” and they have “experienced groups being positively surprised that bad weather doesn’t have a bad influence on their work and they forget about it if they are properly dressed”. They also state that people can “find inspiration from the environment in another way than if they are in a room”. “They can use the nature to set off the creativity and fantasy.”

c) **Kinds of drama activities better applied outdoors:** They recommend outdoor environments for drama activities” in cases that you need inspiration from nature” and also “when you have a group that needs more physical exercises (for example boys that are 11-14 years old)”. In these cases you can easily find the drama room too small, which might result in someone getting hurt. “You can also use another environment if the group is afraid of drama; that way you can trick them into activities that they would refuse in the drama room.”

d) **Problems:** According to them, “problems that can occur are difficulties to concentrate because of sounds, other people moving in the area, bugs and so on”. They suggest that it can be important (especially with children) to “create a room and set boundaries”. They also mention the problem of the sound; outdoors you have to speak louder than indoors. What is more, they state that when you are in the nature you’re often use to moving more freely, and for that reason “it can be hard to keep the discipline”. Moreover, they say that “the drama room (if you have one) has its own expectations, and you can as a teacher teach a group what you expect from them. This can of course be done outside as well, but it can take more energy because of what the group expects.”
Case III

a) Previous experience: The fourth university drama teacher said that he did not actually use drama in outdoor environments as a teacher but he did drama outdoors for other purposes, for example, invisible theatre.

b) Beneficial aspects: He believes that doing drama activities in outdoor environments can be beneficial “when the environment can add to the activity and give possibilities”. Another positive thing that he mentions about doing drama activities outdoors is the sensory experiences that you get; you can use all your senses, “you can have real nature, real water” and so on.

c) Kinds of drama activities better applied outdoors: He recommends drama activities in outdoor environments in cases where “the environment matches the imaginative atmosphere/world you are trying to create”. As an example, he gave an enactment of the fairy tale “The frog prince” that took place in a garden and he happened to watch. As he said, the drama being made was very successful and the environment added to it.

d) Problems: In his point of view, it is necessary to “set some boundaries to the outdoor area “you do the activities so as the students will not go far away. He thinks that outdoors there are problems with sound while doing outdoor activities since voice can be distracted.

Case IV

a) Previous experience: A school drama teacher did some drama work outdoors especially with primary school children and said that a lot of times she started her lesson having energizing games outside (playground, grass yard, beach) attempting to gain children’s enthusiasm and attention. As she said, most of the energizers were group games that needed a large space for the children to run and express themselves freely. She comments that those lessons were great and “the children worked a lot being most of the time concentrated.” She has also done a couple of drama lessons in the medieval castle of her town following a story based drama. The reason for acting the story in the castle was because she wanted to give to the children “real
circumstances”. As she observed from students’ reactions, they “were very pleased and they managed to act!” They were able to take roles and behave as the heroes of the story. Comparing to the lessons they did in the classroom, she commented that in the castle the children did much more concrete work. On the other hand she says that for her, working with teenagers outdoors was more difficult because they hadn’t have the opportunity to work outdoors before (besides gym class) so as a result, they couldn’t concentrate and do, for example, the energizers. Therefore, she hesitates to work with teenagers outdoors.

b) Beneficial aspects: She believes that there are many benefits of doing drama activities in outdoor environments. Firstly, you have “the chance to put the children in a context of their daily life” and “this will be an opportunity to ‘live’ the drama.” Also, children, especially in young ages, can be more concentrated and more involved in the drama. Another benefit of doing drama outdoors that she notes is that “you can take advantage of the space and ‘facilities’ of the outdoor environment.”

c) Kinds of drama activities better applied outdoors: She thinks that the drama activities better applied in outdoor environments are those that “need space and are more like warming up and energizing activities” and those that are proper for putting children to the environment of a story.

d) Problems: On the other hand, she remarks that applying drama activities in outdoor environments can be very risky with children that are not familiar with “process drama” and there is a great possibility to spend your time yelling and running to find them. An open space could “easily take them out of the ‘class environment’ that is being concentrated and following some rules in a specific and well known environment.”

Case V

a) Previous experience: Another school drama teacher who works with 11-18 year old students said that she worked a few times with them outdoors. As she described, she asked some students once “to perform an extract from the play they were performing at a “fun day” at the school.” “The play involved a circus type thing, so it...
was very relevant to doing at this fun day. The students got really involved in the project and were very excited about setting up a tent and staging outside. They also had someone who went around (in character) and drummed up business from the people at the fun day. They found this really enjoyable as instead of being hidden away in the drama room – they were properly out in the public. This also added a sense of anticipation as they did not know what was going to happen. They quickly realized they had to change their performance style to suit the noisier bigger performance space and it really helped them become confident with their characters. Their behavior did change as they were more excited and as they got used to the environment. I think they felt it quite liberating to be doing something so different.”

b) **Beneficial aspects**: In her point of view, “the space adds a different dimension to the work and to the experience of the students.” “It can be much more atmospheric and really suitable if the subject of the play suits the environment and can provide a backdrop that could not be achieved in a theatre space.” She notes that drama in outdoors can be more exciting for the participants and audience.

c) **Kinds of drama activities better applied outdoors**: She said that the “drama activities that are linked to a specific environment or atmosphere are the most suitable” for applying in outdoor environments.

d) **Problems**: The problems that she mentioned are some practical issues of lack of sound/lighting etc or complicated outdoor sound/lighting facilities.

**Case VI**

a) **Previous experience**: The school teacher with specialization in drama in education answered that he taught drama in outdoor environments only in a very few occasions with 11 and 12 year old students. At one occasion he used an outdoor environment as for a drama lesson since the group of students he was teaching was too big. Hence “it was impossible to teach that lesson within the narrow space of a classroom. The lesson was involving the teaching and practice of story-telling form of theatre. Under these circumstances, the children used their environment as a natural set which gave them many creative and symbolic solutions in presenting and acting a given story.”
b) **Beneficial aspects**: He recognizes that natural environments can stimulate students’ imagination which is very important for non-real world to be created. He says that some drama activities taking place in outdoor environments can “make drama context even stronger. Elements of the natural environment could be used either in a literal or a symbolic meaning in the effort for negotiating various meanings or for the representation of stories.” Also, he believes that “an outdoor activity changes the culture of the class which imposes certain routines in which learning activity takes place (e.g. children negotiating meanings in a classroom, sitting on desks with the teacher as the “provider” of new knowledge).” This change of classroom’s culture is a common feature of drama, as for having drama children need to physically act.

c) **Kinds of drama activities better applied outdoors**: He supports drama activities taking place in outdoor environments especially in cases that this would “make drama context even stronger”. He gives as an example the study of environmental issues where students “in role as expert scientists could undertake an assignment of studying their school or community environment in order to present ideas for its improvement”.

d) **Problems**: According to him, the only problems that may occur could “concern discipline issues”. This though could be resolved easily as it depends on the teacher to create a free, though controlled, environment.

Case VII

a) **Previous experience**: Another drama teacher who is also a leader in different free groups said that he used drama in outdoor environments for different purposes: 1) For live role-playing for example in medieval ruins. Drama in this case was used in an integrated project on a medieval theme and finally they work on drama as a “final exam” by creating and acting in their characters. Therefore, all teachers work together cross-subject towards this role-playing exam. The teacher also commented that while doing this drama activity in the medieval ruins, the students “tended to be very focused and they were keeping up the act to maintain the imaginary world they create during the day.” 2) For invisible theatre which takes place in the streets of a town and is part of the revolutionary theme. In his mind, this is a way of “letting
students’ ideas meet reality, to let them challenge social taboos and social codes in a dramatic form”. 3) For street performing which is part of the “discovery theme” (renaissance era) and takes place in street of the town, based on commedia style acting. The participants “entertain by-passers with short scenes, juggling, acrobatics and fire-breathing in order to meet an audience that reacts simply on the standard of entertainment.” In the cases of 2) and 3), “it is the contact with ‘ordinary’ people and reality that triggers the students to focus and get involved in the acting.”

b) **Beneficial aspects**: The teacher finds many benefits of doing the above activities in outdoor environments. For the first activity (1), “the historical environment and the fact that the students are dressed as medieval characters make it easier to get into and remain in character”. “It is easier for students with stage fright and speech-anxiety to take active part in this type of whole-day role-playing.” The benefits of the other two drama activities (2) and (3) are that students “see if their performing can make an impact or a difference for the by-passing audience as opposed to classroom drama where the audience is their classmates/friends that tends to react positive all of the time no matter what.”

c) **Kinds of drama activities better applied outdoors**: He said that the activities mentioned above are best applied in outdoor environments and “would not be as effective if not even dull as indoor activities”.

d) **Problems**: The problems he mentioned from doing the above activities are: for the first one (1) the problem of being outdoors the whole day is of course much connected to weather conditions. Also another problem he may encounter in this case is when “characters get too personal and too hostile towards each other in the plot”. In the cases of drama activities as in (2) and (3) the problem can be that the students “don’t always know where the limits of people’s private sphere is and at what stage and by what people get offended or what to do if reactions from people are not what they expected”.


1.2. Summary from the answers of the drama teachers

1.2.1. Previous experience on using drama activities in outdoor settings

As it seems from the answers above, all the teachers with experience in teaching drama that were asked have done some sort of drama activities in outdoor environments that are presented very briefly below. The number in the brackets represents the number of them who did each activity.

- Enactments of different stories (basically fairy tales) in natural environments where the characters belong or where the story takes place. (3)
- Enactments (role-playing) of historical events in medieval places (2)
- Drama activities in the purest meaning of the word (action) such as energizer games and activities connected to group development–ice breakers, presentation exercises, trust games and cooperation exercises. (2)
- "Invisible theatre" in outdoor environments (2)
- Outdoor performing (1)
- “Street performance (1)

As it seems from the above, most of them have done some kind of enactments of different stories, either fairy tales in nature or historical events in medieval places. In all the cases mentioned, the teachers received very positive reactions on behalf of the students (either young or adult students) and had very good results from enacting stories in outdoor environments.

Moreover two of them referred to drama activities in the purest meaning of the word (action) such as energizing games and activities connected to group development–ice breakers, presentation exercises, trust games and the cooperation exercises. Those kinds of exercises, according to the teachers’ comments are great doing outdoors because there is larger space and therefore freedom in movements and additionally the participants are livelier and more enthusiastic outdoors.

There was also reference to “invisible theatre” in outdoor environments, outdoor performing and “street performance” which are not so relevant for this study.
1.2.2. Benefits of applying drama activities in outdoor environments

As it appears from their answers, almost all the drama teachers that have been questioned believe that drama activities can have beneficial outcomes when they are applied in outdoor environments and they are very positive in using them. Below are pointed out the positive elements that were mentioned.

- It is exciting for the children.
- Children become livelier outdoors.
- It gives students “real circumstances” in the cases when the outdoor environment matches the imaginative atmosphere/world the teacher is trying to create.
- The place adds to the activity and the experience of the students and makes the drama context even stronger.
- An outdoor environment gives plenty of possibilities and the students can take advantage of its space and “facilities”
- Students can find inspiration from an outdoor environment in another way than if they are in a room and they become more creative and imaginative.
- The students get out of the narrow concept of the classroom and they see how an environment can be used in different ways. Therefore, the person’s perception on the environment and consequently the learning are broadened.
- Outdoor environments can provide the students with sensory experiences.
- Weather and climate can give the group different moods and feelings in a positive way.
- There is more space outdoors and that is very positive for drama activities that are more like warming up and energizing activities or any activities that need space for running and moving.
- Students (in some cases) are more concentrated when working on drama in outdoor environments.
- The setting and feelings towards earlier experiences in that place play a big role in student’s behavior.
- Outdoors is easier for people to talk about feelings.
- Outdoor settings bring people more in the same level and that is very important for drama as it is a group art.
The most common arguments among the answers of the teachers are that the participants react positively in this kind of activities, they become more creative and imaginative and that the environment adds to the activity and gives possibilities in the cases it fits its concept.

1.2.3. Recommendations for the kinds of drama activities that are better applied in outdoor environments

As it seems from the teachers’ answers, all of them recommended some kinds of activities they believe are better applied in outdoor environments. Hence, according to them outdoor environments are recommended for drama activities in cases:

- you decide to have a concept of drama in an outdoor environment
- you need inspiration from nature
- you have a group that needs more physical exercises (for example boys that are 11-14 years old)
- you want to encourage the group into activities that they would refuse in the drama room
- when the environment matches the imaginative atmosphere/world you are trying to create
- when you need space for activities that are more like warming up and energizing activities
- when this will make the drama concept even stronger
- of specific activities (which have been tried by a teacher): live role-playing in medieval ruins, invisible theatre and street performance

The most frequent suggestions of the teachers are that outdoor environments are recommended for activities that are related to the environment (when the environment matches the imaginative atmosphere of the activity) and for activities that need more space.
1.2.4. Problems that may occur from applying drama activities in outdoor settings

Here are some of the problems mentioned by the teachers that may occur when applying drama activities in outdoor settings.

- Difficulties to concentrate because of sounds, other people moving in the area, bugs and so on.
- Unconfined area without boundaries and children can run away.
- Discipline problems because of more freedom in movements outdoors.
- It takes more energy on behalf of the leader.
- Sound problems since voice can be distracted outdoors and therefore students need to speak louder.
- Lack of sound/lighting etc or complicated outdoor sound/lighting facilities.
- Bad weather conditions.
- The characters can get too personal and too hostile towards each other in the plot.

What is more a teacher answered that in her opinion there are no problems with doing drama activities in outdoor settings and she commented that working successfully with drama outdoors depends a lot on the leader and on the group of participants.

From these arguments, the most common ones among their answers are the discipline and sound problems and the difficulties of the participants to concentrate because of several outdoor distractions.

2. Results from elementary school teachers regarding the activities they did

Finally, eleven teachers participated in the research and after they tried out some of the activities that had been sent to them, they evaluated them by answering the open questionnaire sent to them.
In this part there are presented the answers of the teachers including which activities they tried out, with what age and number of students they worked with for each activity and where, whether the activity was successful and the reasons for that, the beneficial outcomes of doing the activity in an outdoor environment, any possible problems they encountered and the students’ reactions they noted. Their answers are categorized according to the name of each activity. The order the activities are presented here is the one of the handbook of the drama activities recommended for using in outdoor environments that had been sent to the teachers that is included in the appendix.

2.1. Answers from the teachers regarding the activities they did

I. Enactment of different stories in outdoor environments (see page 73 in the Appendix A)

Four of the teachers did this activity mostly using famous fairy tales for enacting outdoors and all of them worked with groups of children from 6-9 years old. Just one of the teachers tried another way of working by letting the students create their own story inspired by the environment they were in. Below are the answers of each teacher separately.

• One of the teachers in an ordinary Swedish primary school worked with a class of 7 children of 6-7 years old on two famous fairy tales: “Little Red Riding Hood” and “Three Billy Goats Gruff” in two different periods of time. The enactment of the first fairy tale, “Little Red Riding Hood”, took place not far from school in a place with grass, 8-9 trees, some bushes and a path through the area while the second one took place in the schoolyard. It was very positive and easy enacting these fairy tales in natural outdoor environments since the children could “find a place to act in just by thinking of the story”. “They didn’t have to make nature, they were in it.” In both cases the children were excited and had fun role-playing different characters or animals. They thought it was easy since they were very familiar with the stories and everyone knew what to say.
For the enactment of the first fairy tale the teacher needed to stretch the boundaries of the story by placing two hunters and adding a dad. The only problem that he dealt with was sound since the children didn’t speak loud enough. For enacting the second fairy tale, “Three Billy Goats Gruff”, they used another way since it could involve only four characters: some of the children were acting while the others were viewers and then they were changing roles. Changing roles was easy for that story since it was short and simple and it was also easy for the children to speak loud and clear because of the short sentences in the story.

Another teacher who works in a communal “lågstadieskola” worked on this activity as follows: She divided the students into groups of 4-5 and they were required to make a drama on any famous fairy tale they knew. Some of the children did their drama in a field and some in the forest. The activity was successful and encouraged children’s imagination and fantasy since they had to make something up themselves without using a book and from what they could use in that environment. The children liked the activity so much that they wanted to make their dramas better and better and therefore it was difficult to stop them in time. They could remember the fairy tales better (even details) after dramatizing them and in the end they asked to do the activity again.

The same teacher worked on this activity in another way as well. She divided again a class of 17 pupils of 8-9 years old into groups of 4-5. Each group was required to create its own story inspired by the environment they were in (in the forest) and then present it to the whole class. The activity was successful and the children were enthusiastic about it and wanted to do it again. “The children just love to make up stories and to act.” It also encouraged their imagination since they could find “equipment” in the forest. “They can imagine that a leaf is a book for example.” The only problem that she dealt with was timing and that it was hard to know, before starting, how long the activity will take.

Another teacher who works at a “fritids” school with 6-9 year old students, tried working with them on enacting a fairy tale in a small forest close to school. She
Another teacher who works in a primary school “grundskola” worked on five famous fairy tales (The Frog Prince, Three Billy Goats Gruff, Snow White, Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella) and two Aesop’s fables (The Fox and the Crow and The Tortoise and the Hare) with a group of 22 six year old and 23 seven year old children. All of the enactments of fairy tales took place in the “school-forest”. Enacting those fairy tales in the “forest” was very successful, the children liked enacting the stories and they were more creative outdoors than indoors because “outdoors there isn’t that much ‘school’”. Through these activities, she got to know the children who were totally new for her and afterwards she got “a special relation to them”. The only problem was the existence of snow and as she would like to do the activities again when there is not snow around. Finally she said that her colleagues “found a new way of doing drama activities!”

**II. Using a specific component of a story for drama (see page 84 in Appendix A)**

A teacher in a communal school used this activity with two different classes, one of sixteen 9 year old students and another of twenty-four 10 year old students. She worked with both classes outside in the schoolyard. The activity was successful and the children were positive. The only problem that she dealt with was while working with the 9 year old students who didn’t speak very loud and therefore the group had a hard time listening to each other.
III. Story telling through movement (see page 86 in the Appendix A)

For doing this activity one teacher in a “grundskola” used the story “The legend of the shooting star” and she worked with twenty 10 year old students in a small forest. She started the activity by lighting a fire and talking about the Indians and what fire means to them. Afterwards she read the story firstly in English, and then in Swedish and the last time while she was reading it again in English, the students had the opportunity to move according to the story. In her opinion, “the fire was a good way to start and all the children liked it”. Doing the activity outside in the forest and having a fire, made the story more real and in the end the children got excited and they were wondering whether it is a true story or not.

IV. Listen to Nature (see page 88 in the Appendix A)

This activity was tried out by two different teachers and with children in different ages, one with 12-13 year old children and the other with 8-9 year old children

- One of the teachers in an ordinary primary school did this activity with a group of 31 children of 12-13 years old. It took place in a forest with a “house” (a place with roof and floor but no walls) where you can dance in the summer. According to her opinion, the place selected was very good and despite the fact that it was quite cold, the children were enjoying the activity and didn’t complain about the cold. Also, she believes that if they didn’t have the roof and the floor to sit on, it would have been colder for them and maybe not so successful. The atmosphere was perfect since there was silence around and they could only “listen to some birds singing and the wind blowing”. It was beneficial to do this activity outside in nature because it gave the children the opportunity to relax and let themselves free to experience things there. The dramas afterwards were very successful and a good discussion followed. This activity was “a new experience for me and the children!”

- Another teacher in a communal lågstadieskola” did this activity with a group of seventeen 8-9 year old students. She divided them into three groups and the
activity took place in a natural environment with each group being in a different place in the same area: one group was in the forest, the other group near water and the last one “in” some bushes. There were many sounds in that place, for example lots of birds and therefore doing the activity in a natural place was “more peaceful than to sit in the classroom and try to listen to all kinds of sounds we are used to hear”. The activity was successful as the children were very into it, they understood very well what they were supposed to do and they liked the activity a lot. The children “like to use their fantasy”. It was easy for them to make up a story with their pictures but making a drama afterwards took some time. Both the students and the teacher learned a lot from this activity and afterwards they asked her to do the activity again.

V. Be an animal (see page 89 in the Appendix A)

This activity was also done by two different teachers and with children in different ages, 11-12 year old and 6-7 year old.

- One teacher in an ordinary primary school did this activity with a group of 61 students, of which 30 were 11-12 years old and 31 were 12-13 years old. It took place nearby the schoolyard in a place with some trees, a little hill and some bushes. In the beginning the whole group worked as one and then the teacher decided to split it into two smaller groups and as she said it worked better. The activity was successful; everyone participated and had plenty of fun. They did this activity after a discussion they had in the classroom about animals. So, it was quite easy for the students who picked their animals by themselves. The students were not shy at all to demonstrate their animals and a funny atmosphere was created among them. They only had “trouble of finding thing to use for showing the animals and the feelings because of the snow”.

- Another teacher in a communal school did this activity twice, supported by a second teacher, with twenty two 6-7 year old students. The first time they divided the students into two groups and the second time they worked with all the students in one big group. It was an excellent activity to do outside which helped the students feel comfortable within their group and “strengthened their self
confidence”. In the cases that children were feeling shy or uncomfortable to act out by themselves, she went with them and they did it together.

VI. The lion king’s court (see page 90 in the Appendix A)

One teacher in an ordinary primary school did this activity, supported by another teacher, with a group of 61 children from which 30 were 11-12 years old and 31 were 12-13 years old. The activity took place nearby the schoolyard at a place with some trees, a little hill and some bushes. The students were divided into two groups and each teacher was responsible for one group. This activity was made after a discussion in the classroom about animals and adjectives and it was a good way to see which students could understand and show what an adjective is. Also, outside there is plenty of space and therefore both groups could do it in the same time. In her opinion it was very positive that the children “nearly forgot they were children in the age of 11-13 years old” and behaved differently.

VII. An apple tree grows (see page 92 in the Appendix A)

This activity has been tried by three teachers in different classes. The two of the classes were consisted of 6-7 year old children and the other one of 9 year old children.

- One of the teachers in an ordinary primary school worked with eighteen 6-7 year old children in a grass field. While he was reading the text (instructions) to the children, they were moving (growing) according to what they were hearing, the procedure of growth of an apple tree. The activity was successful and it was “easy” and understandable for the children when he explained to them what they should do. Doing this activity in a natural environment, “the children could relate the activity to nature”. He mentioned some comments of the children: “It was funny when the arms went heavy”, “It was sad to be an apple seed and plant”, “It was funny when the branches almost broke”, “It was hard to stand with the arms in the air for a long time”, “It was a nice story”.
• This activity has been also tried two times by another teacher in a communal primary school with the same group of twenty two 6-7 year old students in the schoolyard of their school and it was successful as well. The activity helped the group to “strengthen their self confidence” and that it is excellent to do outside. The students were positive for the activity and asked to do it again. There were two teachers who lead the activity and that fact was very positive in her point of view. The first time they did the activity they divided the group into two smaller groups in order to make the pupils feel more comfortable and the second time they worked with the whole group as one.

• Another teacher in the same communal school as the teacher mentioned above worked on the same activity with two different groups in the schoolyard. One group was consisted of sixteen 9 year old students and the other group of twenty four 10 year old students. The activity was successful with both groups, “maybe because it was individual”. It was very different from other outdoor activities but she didn’t encounter any problems. Instead the children in both groups were very positive.

**VIII. Traveling back in time (see page 93 in the Appendix A)**

One of the teachers in an ordinary primary school worked on this activity with nineteen 6-7 year old students. The students were divided into four groups. The activity took place on a playground which is on sand and with bushes and trees around and they used one of the towers as a time machine. Being in nature enhanced the activity since students “could act like people did 3000 years ago by using sticks, the sand, leaves, bushes and trees”. It was better to do this activity outside because the children “could dig in the sand, build traps and so on”. Generally, the activity was successful; the children didn’t have any problems to start the activity in different roles, they had fun and they would like to do it again.

**IX. Rituals (see page 95 in the Appendix A)**

A teacher in an ordinary primary school worked on this activity with a group of 61 children of which 30 were 11–12 years old and 31 were 12–13 years old. It took
place nearby the schoolyard at a place with some trees, a little hill and some bushes. This activity was quite hard to do with this group of children. They found it difficult as they couldn’t understand what a ritual is and some of them were just making fun. So, the teacher believes that they should have talked more about the concept of ritual or perhaps the children should be in another age. Nature, at that time of year where there was plenty of snow, didn’t help the activity but on the other hand “snow was in the way”. Nature could enhance the activity if you can have things to create with.

X. Communication (see page 97 in the Appendix A)

A teacher in a communal school did this activity with eleven year old students in the schoolyard. She divided them into three groups with eight students in each one and gave to each person in the group one character from the following: rushed, controlling, indecisive, over-positive, off-topic, negative and sarcastic. After she told them the scenario, she gave them ten minutes to act it out according to their role-character. Then they discussed about the different characters, which roles leaded to cooperation and which didn’t. The children didn’t have the chance to do it again with more productive personality behavior and that was due to lack of time. In one of the three groups “the activity was very successful, they played their roles well, to be true they almost overacted”. The second group found it difficult to start acting in their roles and the third group was just quieter than the first one but according to the discussion afterwards they all brought out the same thoughts about the different role-characters: “It was good to be positive but it could be too much”, “the characters negative, indecisive and sarcastic didn’t lead the work forward at all”, “the rushed one could lead the work forward but it could also lead to a slipshod work”, “the controlling character became a leader in one way but he was irritating in a way too”, “the off-topic person was destroying the work by talking about other things.”

In general terms, despite the fact that the activity was not very easy for young students and it could get embarrassing for those who are not used to act, it was successful and fulfilled its objective to address communication problems with a variety of different characters and to appreciate, by role playing, the importance of empathy and good communication.
2.2. Summary of the answers of the teachers regarding the activities they did

As it seems from the above, most of the activities that were sent to the teachers were tried. The most common one was the “Enactment of different stories in outdoor environments” (Activity 1) and it is remarkable that in all the cases the children were between 6-9 years old. Most of those enactments took place in natural environments.

As for the rest of the activities, “An Apple Tree Grows”, “Be an Animal” and “Listen to Nature” were done by more than one teacher and “Story telling through movement” “Using a specific component of a story for drama” “Traveling back in time”, “Rituals”, “Communication” and “The lion king’s court” were done only once.

Moreover, most of the teachers used natural outdoor environments (a forest area in most cases or a field area) and some of them used the schoolyard for applying those activities. The activities were applied for ages from six to thirteen and both with small and large groups. In some cases (especially with larger groups) there were two teachers responsible for the activity.

Below, there is a summary of the answers of the teachers concerning the successfulness of the activities, the beneficial outcomes of doing the activities in outdoor environments and the problems mentioned.

- Successful of the activities

In general terms, the drama activities that were done by the teachers in different outdoor environments were successful and the teachers noted positive reactions on behalf of the students who, according to the teachers’ comments they enjoyed the activities and in many cases they got enthusiastic and wanted to do them again.

In only one case, for the activity no.13 “Rituals”, the teacher commented that it was difficult to do with the group she was working with perhaps because their age (11-13) was not appropriate for this activity. She noted that the students had problems in
understanding what a ritual is and reflecting on that, she said that they should have talked more about it before.

- **Beneficial outcomes of doing the activities in outdoor environments**

Here there are briefly presented the comments of the teachers regarding the beneficial effects they observed while doing the activities with elementary school students.

- Doing the activity in a natural environment encouraged their imagination since they could find “equipment” in the forest. For example they could imagine that a leaf is a book.
- It encouraged children’s imagination and fantasy since they had to make something up themselves without using a book and from what they could use in that environment.
- In the case of enacting a fairy tale, the children could find a place to act in just by thinking of the story. They didn’t have to make nature, they were in it.
- The students were more creative outdoors than indoors because outdoors there isn’t that much “school”.
- The children were excited and had fun role-playing different characters or animals.
- Doing the activity outside in the forest and having a fire, for the activity “Story telling through movement”, made the story more real and in the end the children got excited and they were wondering whether it is a true story or not.
- Doing this activity in a natural environment, the children could relate the activity to nature.
- Being in nature enhanced the activity “Traveling back in time” since students could act like people did 3000 years ago by using sticks, the sand, leaves, bushes and trees. Also, as the children said, it was better to do this activity outside because they could dig in the sand, build traps and so on.
- The activity “Listen to Nature” was beneficial to do outside in nature because it gave the children the opportunity to relax and let themselves free to experience things there. The atmosphere was perfect since there was silence.
around and they could only listen to some birds singing and the wind blowing and therefore using that environment was better than to sit in the classroom and try to listen to all kinds of sounds that the children are used to hear.

- There is plenty of space outdoors for large groups.
- It is easy to create a dramatic atmosphere in the forest for example as if the animals could show up there for the activity “Be an animal”
- Teachers found a new way of doing drama activities!

The most common argument among their answers was the fact that outdoor environments inspired students since they could relate the activity to the environment and use the possibilities it could offer.

- **Problems mentioned by teachers**

Here there are pointed out some problems the teacher mentioned that they dealt with while doing those activities in outdoor settings with elementary school students.

- At that time of year where there was plenty of snow, nature didn’t help the activity “Rituals” but on the other hand it was in the way for this activity.
- It was difficult because of the snow to find things in nature to use for the activity.
- There was problem with the sound since the children didn’t speak loud enough and therefore the group had a hard time to listen to each other.
- It was difficult to know, before starting, how long the activity will take.

The most common problem of those that the teachers mentioned was the problem of sound since in the outdoors the voice can easily be distracted.
3. Answers from teachers in reference to all the activities

3.1. Teachers’ comments or recommendations for the activities

The second part of the questionnaire includes two questions in reference to all the activities. One of them deals with teachers’ comments or recommendations for the activities. Seven out of eleven teachers replied to this question. Below there are presented their answers.

Three of them who work together in an ordinary primary school answered together and recommended that for the successfulness of drama activities outdoors the teachers should “talk to the children about the importance of talking loud and clear when they are in nature”. They also recommended for the teachers to “think about the place-options before they start an activity”.

Moreover, a teacher in an ordinary school for children from age 6 to age 13 commented that in her opinion the teacher has to know his/her students very well “to do things like that outside”. She also recommended that the teacher can not just read what to do but he/she has to think about it before and perhaps adjust it a little bit to the specific group he/she is working with. The teacher has to do the activities in such a way that will help the group to work better.

An other teacher who works in a primary school “grundskola” and worked with several enactments of different fairy tales recommended that this activity “is best doing in small groups of around 2-8 children and they can perhaps show to each other”.

In addition, a teacher in a communal school found some of the activities hard for her group of students, but as she said she would consider doing them in other kind of groups as well.

Also, a teacher in a primary school “grundskola” who worked on “story telling through movement” with the story “The legend of the falling star” recommended the use of fire for this activity.
3.2. Teachers’ overall opinion on drama activities in outdoor environments

Here there are presented the answers of the teachers to the second question in the second part of the questionnaire concerning their overall opinion on doing drama activities in outdoor environments. Seven of the teachers replied to that question.

A teacher in a communal school said that she is very positive to use drama activities outdoors. In addition, three of the teachers who work together in an ordinary primary school replied that the activities were good, it was “fun to do them outside” and that “the children liked it”.

Moreover, another teacher in a primary school “grundskola” was very happy and thankful to be in the position to do these activities and she said that she is going to do it again. She also wants to try doing it in English with older pupils. Furthermore, a teacher who works in an ordinary school for children from age 6 to age 13 said that in her opinion “drama activities in outdoor environments is a good thing”. You are “not so bound of the school situations” and the children can “think more about the reality when they can be outside and do things”.

Finally, a teacher in a “grundskola” primary school believes that it is a good idea to use the outdoor room for all sorts of activities. In her mind, the only problem that can appear with drama is that sometimes it can be hard to hear each other. She thinks that “it is important to tell the children that they have to speak up and the audience has to be really quiet”.

4. Observations of drama activities been done in outdoor settings in two elementary schools.

As mentioned before, two groups, both of six and seven year old children in two different schools in Sweden were observed. The observations were unstructured and took place in the middle and end of March, when there was still plenty of snow.
1st School (see pictures of this observation in Appendix D)

Organization of the activities: In the first school, which was a grundskola, the children enacted the fairy tales “Red Riding Hood” and “Three Billy Goats Gruff” in the area of the school forest. In the beginning all the children met in front of their class and they were asked to form a circle. There were two teachers, the group leader and another teacher who was helping. Firstly, the children did a warm-up game in their circle and sang a song they were all familiar with. Then the teachers gave them plastic bags with costumes and several objects appropriate for enacting the above fairy tales and they went to a particular point at the school forest (the place was familiar to the children).

The activity was very organized. The teachers had planned and prepared everything beforehand. They introduced the children to the activity inside the classroom (reading the fairy tales and some practicing) and therefore the children knew what they were supposed to do when they went outdoors and they already had their roles. So, while the teacher was reading the fairy tales loudly, the children were acting out. In some cases the teachers were helping them remember their words.

Children’s reactions: As for the children’s reactions while role-playing the different characters, some of them were more into their roles and some of them were more shy and kept back. But in general terms, despite the snow and the cold, they seemed interested in enacting the fairy tales.

Effect of the outdoor environment The plot of both fairy tales is taking place in the forest. Even just this fact was giving “real circumstances” to the students and the drama was more real. Moreover, the fact that the children were having appropriate costumes to role-play the goats, the troll, the red riding hood, the wolf and the grandmother was also positive in putting the children into the drama and making it more alive. The outdoor environment was used in some points, for example for the fairy tale “Three Billy Goats Gruff” to make “the bridge” where the troll was living.
2nd School

Organization of the activities: In the second school, the children did the activities “Be an Animal” and “An Apple Tree Grows”. The activities took place in the schoolyard. Again in this case there were two teachers, one was the group leader and the other teacher was helping. As the teacher said, it was the second time the children were doing the same activities and at the first time they were enthusiastic and they had asked her to do them again.

Firstly, the children and the two teachers were gathered in a circle in the playground and played a game they were all familiar with and then, in the circle, they did the activity “Be an Animal”. The activity was done as follows: The teacher had names of animals written in small papers and the children, one by one, should choose (by chance) a small paper, go in the middle of the circle and act like that animal (basically move like that animal). The other children were supposed to guess what the animal was and the one who guessed right should go next and choose a paper. For the second activity “An Apple Tree Grows”, the teacher asked the students to spread in the area. Then she started reading the story slowly and with appropriate pauses so as the children could enact the procedure of growth of plants.

Children’s reactions: The children were doing these activities for the second time and therefore they were very easy and understandable for them. They knew exactly what to do. Despite that, there were still some children who, especially for the first activity “Be an Animal”, were shy and more hesitant to act in front of the other children. In these cases, the teachers were trying to encourage them or act together with them. On the other hand, according to the teacher’s comments there were some other children who appeared to be less shy and more keen to participate outdoors than indoors. In general terms, the children were interested in participating in the activities and the fact they were out in the snow and it was quite cold didn’t seem to bother them.

Effect of outdoor environment: Both activities have a concept related to an outdoor natural environment. Although practically the environment was not used for these
activities, there was a connection between what the children were doing and the environment.
CHAPTER IV. DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study, apart from recommending some drama activities for outdoor environments, was to examine their relative success on elementary school children and teachers’ opinions on doing drama in outdoor settings. The research that was contemplated included opinions from drama teachers, evaluation of some sample activities done by teachers in elementary schools and some unstructured observations.

In general terms, the teachers (both the drama teachers and those who were asked to do the activities) showed positive attitude towards working outdoors with drama activities. All the drama teachers had worked with drama outdoors even for different purposes, and have noticed some of its beneficial aspects. In addition, the other teachers who participated in this research were very interested in doing some of the activities been sent to them. Also, in relation to their answers afterwards, they all seemed very positive with the results they received despite the cold and the snow, since the activities took place in February and March in several parts of Sweden.

Moreover, the purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview on the results discussing the research questions and to compare the findings of this research with the literature and my personal opinion. In addition, this chapter aims to show methodological concerns and limitations of this study and to provide recommendations for teachers who are interested in doing drama activities in outdoor settings and general conclusions.

This chapter is divided into the following sections:
1. Overall discussion on the beneficial aspects of doing drama activities in outdoor environments
2. Overall discussion on the problems that may occur when doing drama activities in outdoor environments
3. Synopsis of the beneficial aspects and problems of doing drama activities in outdoor environments that this research revealed
4. Methodological concerns
1. Overall discussion on the beneficial aspects of doing drama activities in outdoor environments

Regarding the central research question for this study, the results of the research reveal many beneficial aspects of applying drama activities in outdoor environments. In this section the positive elements are discussed. There was an attempt to present the findings based on what would be the most relevant to teachers who are considering using drama in outdoor settings with their students.

To start with, a very strong point revealed from the results is that outdoor environments give plenty of possibilities and can add to the activity and give in many cases “real circumstances” to the children. Two specific examples for that are the enactments of fairy tales in nature and the enactments of historical events in historical places where the children are put in the environment of the story. This argument is connected with the idea of creating “a sense of place”, a concept that is suggested in outdoor education. In other words, the idea of selecting an appropriate place for each educational purpose where students get firsthand, direct experiences is necessary. (Higgins and Nicol, 2002) As Szczepanski (2002) says, in authentic environments and through authentic activities, learning becomes more alive. In my point of view, this is one of the most important benefits of applying drama activities outside the classroom.

Additionally, most of the teachers commented on the positive reactions on behalf of the students while participating in drama activities outdoors. Among others, they wrote that “it is exciting for the children” and that “the children become livelier outdoors”. This is definitely true as children love to get out of the usual setting, out of the certain routines of the classroom. Getting involved in drama in outdoor
environments is a very good way to accomplish this. What is more, Kim Davis (web.4) comments that taking creative activities outside can add interest and variety to lessons for everyone involved.

Moreover, another common argument was found to be the encouragement of creativity and imagination by outdoor environments. Referring to a teacher’s comment “the children could imagine for example that a leaf is a book”. What is more, another interesting comment I quote here from a teacher is that “children become more creative outdoors since being in outdoor environments takes them out of the ‘narrow’ context of the classroom”. The same argument was found in the literature according to Moore and Wong (1997; 197) proponents of outdoor education see “the out-of doors as a potential space of creativity and imagination.” Burriss and Boyd (2005) also express that frequently, it is such nontraditional school experiences that motivate, inspire, and initiate students’ creativity. In my point of view and from my own experiences, outdoors as a place away from the limits that the environment of the classroom normally sets, children feel “freer” and allow new, creative ideas in their minds.

A further frequent point of view among teachers’ answers is that outdoors can provide students with sensory experiences which are a positive factor for drama activities to be created. Two teachers who tried doing a drama activity which involved using senses to a great extend commented that the outdoor natural environment enhanced the activity and gave the children the opportunity to relax and let themselves free to experience things there. Referring to the literature, Cornell (1998; 9) suggests that using nature can “stimulate joyful, enlightening insights and experiences”.

Furthermore, among the answers, the argument of outdoors providing plenty of space for children to move was also quite frequent as a benefit for using the outdoor environments. This is also positive in cases of large groups and for activities that need more space especially for those activities that are more like energizers. This point is also expressed in Bilton (2002) who states that outdoor environments, in

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22 Burriss and Boyd, 2005, p.110
contrast with indoor, can offer larger space for children to move freely and to move so that they can use their whole bodies in imaginative and fantasy play situations. Braun, Sutterby and Thornton (web.2) express the same idea by saying that the difference with the outdoor fantasy (in contrary with imaginative play area inside) is that there is much more scope for movement and the play can be on a larger scale and involve the whole child.

Some other beneficial aspects from working with drama in outdoor environments that were mentioned less include the following: the children become more concentrated, it is easier for people to talk about feelings and people are more in the same level. These facts are considered by some teachers as important for drama to be created. Among the answers there were also pointed out, weather and climate can give the group different moods and feelings in a positive way and the setting and feelings towards prior experience in a specific outdoor location tend to determine students’ behavior.

2. Overall discussion on the problems that may occur while doing drama activities in outdoor environments

Apart from the beneficial affects of applying drama activities in outdoor settings, this research showed that there were also some problems that occurred and they are discussed below. Again, the aspects are listed in order of importance.

First of all, it is necessary to examine the influence of weather conditions on the activities, as they take place outdoors. On one hand, there is the point of view that weather and climate can give the group different moods and feelings in a positive way. Two drama teachers have experienced groups being positively surprised that bad weather doesn’t have a bad influence on their work. Similarly, another teacher commented that one of the activities she tried succeeded even though the weather was not so good. In her words, she explained, “despite the fact that it was quite cold, the children were enjoying the activity and didn’t complain about the cold”. On the other hand, some of the teachers commented that the existence of snow negatively
affected the activities. As they mentioned, the reason for that was the fact that everything was covered by snow and therefore the children couldn’t find things in nature to create for their dramas. Bad weather and snow can either distract from or add to drama activities depending on what their aim is. I agree with the teachers’ opinion that snow can inhibit those activities that can be used to inspire students’ imagination and creativity by using things they can find in the environment. Thus, the teachers should not only think in advance about a suitable environment, but they should choose to do activities when weather conditions support the ultimate goal.

Moreover, a very frequent problem mentioned by both groups of teachers is the problem of sound. Voices can easily be distracted outdoors and therefore it is difficult for the group to hear each other. For this reason, some of the teachers recommended telling the group beforehand that they need to speak louder so as everyone can hear them. Connected to this, some teachers mentioned the problem of concentration of the students. The students can have difficulties in concentrating not only because they can not hear each other very well but also because of other distracting sounds in the environment, other people moving in the area, bugs and so on.

In addition, it is interesting to notice that while in the outdoors, there is plenty of space which is considered to be a positive element that provides more freedom of movements and larger group involvement, some people claim that this can create discipline problems. Three university drama teachers believe that creating drama in the outdoors is a problem as it is an unconfined area without boundaries. This opinion is related to McCaslin (2006), who doesn’t recommend the use of a too large, unconfined area such as a gymnasium or a playground since that could lead to chaos and she suggests the establishment and maintenance of boundaries.

Furthermore, some other less frequent points taken from the research regarding problems of doing drama activities outdoors are: it takes more energy on behalf of the leader to work outdoors, it is difficult to know how long the activity will take, the characters can get too personal and too hostile towards each other in the plot, and connected with “drama for the audience” outdoors there is lack of, or complicated sound/lighting equipment.
Finally, I consider very significant the opinion of a drama teacher concerning the problems of doing drama in outdoor settings. She says that in her opinion it all depends on the leader and on the group of participants whether drama activities will be successful outdoors or not. Thus, she considers no problems in drama activities taking place outdoors. This comment comes from arguably the most experienced drama teacher of all participants in this study. She was the only participant who looked at the role of leadership in teaching drama in the outdoors.
3. Synopsis of the beneficial aspects and problems of doing drama activities in outdoor environments that this research revealed

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<th>Beneficial aspects</th>
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<td>● Outdoor environments give plenty of possibilities, can add to the activity and give “real circumstances” to the children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● The students react in a positive way while participation in drama activities outdoors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Outdoor environments encourage creativity and imagination.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Outdoors can provide students with sensory experiences which are a positive factor for drama activities to be created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Outdoors provide plenty of space for children to move.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Less frequently mentioned</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Outdoors the children become more concentrated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Outdoors it is easier for people to talk about feelings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Outdoors people are more in the same level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Weather and climate can give the group different moods and feelings in a positive way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Feelings towards prior experience in a specific outdoor location tend to determine students’ behavior.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Problems

**Most frequently mentioned**

- Voices can easily be distracted outdoors and therefore it is difficult for the group to hear each other.
- Bad weather conditions negatively affect the activities.
- Students may be less concentrated in outdoor environments.
- Discipline problems are likely to appear as outdoors is an unconfined area without boundaries.

**Less frequently mentioned**

- It takes more energy on behalf of the leader to work outdoors.
- It is difficult to know how long the activity will take.
- The characters can get too personal and too hostile towards each other in the plot.
- Connected with “drama for the audience” outdoors there is lack of, or complicated sound/lighting equipment.

### 4. Methodological concerns

There are two methodological concerns that need to be recognized in relation to this study. First of all, because of the fact that the research took place in two cold months (February and March), some teachers commented that they were not able to do as many activities as they wanted. Therefore, this research showed less examples of activities done by teachers than it could probably show if the research took place in warmer months.

Also, there was an aspect of the follow-up questionnaire that may have been unclear to the participants. They were asked whether they thought the activities were successful and why. This is of course something very difficult to measure. “Success”
can mean something different for each one and can have different levels. Thus, in some cases, it was not clear how the teachers perceived “success” for the activities they did.

5. General Recommendations for teachers interested in working with drama outdoors

Teachers may benefit from the information compiled from this research by using it to determine how and why it is good working on drama activities in outdoor settings. General recommendations for using drama in outdoor settings that emerge from this research include:

- Teachers should try to adjust the activities according to the level of the group they work with and the goals they want to achieve and not just follow exactly what is written in the instructions.
- It is better to use drama activities outdoors with groups of children that are familiar with drama.
- For drama to become more “alive” teachers should try to find the environment most suitable for each activity that fits the concept of the drama and matches the atmosphere they are trying to create.
- It is a good idea to make the activities in an area as quiet as possible and gather the students in a circle (so as everyone can see and listen) which can be used as a reference point during the activity.
- Teachers should talk to the children in advance about the importance of speaking loudly and clearly when they are outdoors and remind the audience to be really quiet.
- It is important to set some boundaries to the outdoor area you do the activities so as the students won’t go far away.
- In the cases of enacting stories outdoors it is recommended to create small groups of 2-8 individuals within the larger group.
6. Limitations

It needs to be mentioned that the results from this study apply to specific groups of children and teachers and in a certain time and place. It is likely that a teacher who applies these activities with elementary school children will have similar results. However it is important to know that part of the research was conducted in Swedish schools where students and teachers were familiar with working together outdoors. In situations where elementary school teachers and students do not have a prior experience working together in outdoor environments, it can follow that teachers may have a more difficult time meeting their goals in teaching drama outdoors.

7. General Conclusions

This research has demonstrated, through the methods applied, that there are several beneficial aspects to applying drama activities in outdoor environments. The research has also provided some insight into common problems that can be faced while working with drama activities outdoors. Thus, the hypothesis that there are beneficial aspects on applying drama activities in outdoor environments was supported to some extent but indicate a need for closer examination by further research on a larger scale.

Notwithstanding the fact that it was made in a quite small scale, the research believes that nevertheless this study is of significant benefit. The findings of this study together with the practical examples of activities that can be used suggest potential implications on behalf of teachers inside and outside schools. The pre-planned lessons and ideas that are included in this study may perhaps be one of the most beneficial aspects of it. Hopefully, this study will motivate teachers to use outdoor environments for applying drama activities. What is more, I hope that this study will provide a strong foundation upon future studies.
Recommendations for Future Research

This research has raised some ideas for future examination on drama applied in outdoor settings. One of the findings of this study is that the environment adds to activity and if you change the environment you change the experience of the participants. In my opinion, it would be interesting to examine the results of specific activities in different environments to see how they can influence the activities. The comment of a drama teacher, that the success of drama activities in outdoor settings simply depends on the leader and the group, could initiate future research investigating how different leaders or different groups can affect the results. Perhaps more research should be dedicated to addressing the leadership role of teachers in facilitating group dynamics in drama in outdoor environments. Another research idea could be to investigate the outcomes of working outdoors with drama in relation to different sex or age of the children. It would be also interesting to examine the students’ opinions of doing drama in outdoor environments by giving them questionnaires to complete.
REFERENCES

Books:


**Webpages:**


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   to find out how early humans discovered fire and dramatize that discovery.

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   communication.
(1) Enactment of different stories in outdoor environments

**Age:** 6-12

**Objectives:**

Through enacting stories in the outdoors children will:

- Examine a story more closely, improving their comprehension and understanding.
- Examine life from various viewpoints by role playing different characters.
- Engage in productive social interaction, cooperative learning and group problem solving.
- Develop their spoken language.
- Become familiar with several stories, many times from different cultures.
- Use outdoor environments in a creative way.

**Description:**

1. Choose a story that you think is appropriate for the group of children you are working with. Below there are some stories that are recommended for drama.
2. Find an appropriate place for the enactment of each story based on the plot of the story. It could be a garden, a field, a forest or even the schoolyard.
3. Set boundaries for the children in the area you choose.
4. Begin with some warm-up games.
5. Motivate children by introducing them to the story.
6. Present the story to the children.
7. Work on the stories. This can be through different ways as described below.
8. After the children have worked on the stories, provide opportunity for reflection. This can happen in many ways. One way is through a discussion about the story, its characters, and their own feelings when they were role-playing the different characters and the moral or importance of each story. You can also use other kinds of reflection such as reflection in small groups, body movement, a painting or any other way.

**Different ways of working on the stories in the outdoors:**

- Work on one story with all the children. Stretch the boundaries of the story – add in extra family members, duplicate protagonists/antagonists, use herds of animals instead of one so that every child in the class has a role to play. Start working with separate scenes. In any story selected for dramatization it is easier to work on small portions first rather than to attempt the entire story at once.
• Divide the children into 3-4 groups and give to all groups the same story without the ending. Tell them that each group should cooperate and create its own ending to the story and act it out.

• Divide the children into 3-4 groups and give a story to each group. Children are encouraged to stretch the boundaries of the story they are given so that all the members of the groups have a role. There can also be a narrator. Give them some time to prepare the performance of their story which they will present later in front of the whole group.

• Let the children sit in a circle and tell the story slowly. While you are storytelling, the children can come in the middle of the circle to act different parts of the story. They can cooperate and be an animal, an object (for example a door) and so on. It is recommended that children switch roles so that each has a turn at each character.

• Divide the children into groups of around 5-6 persons each. Each group is required to create its own story inspired by the outdoor environment they are in. Also they can create stories based on a list of words that are given to them (clue words). After they create their story they must work in preparation for performing it. When the groups are ready call them to perform it in front of the whole class.

• The students work together to create a pathway in a forest or field with different scenes of the story in enacted along the way. At each stop along the pathway, a group of student cooperates to enact a scene. When the children are ready, they perform their work.

• Tell the students a familiar story and then divide them into groups of around 6 persons in each. The groups are required to use their familiarity with the plot to create new ideas, by changing the story, modernizing it, or placing characters from several other stories into one. Then, they are given some time to find ways to act it out and in the end perform it to the whole class.
Stories recommended for drama in outdoor settings:

Famous Fairy tales

- “The Frog Prince”

  Place recommended: in a garden or close to a lake.

  Equipment: none

  Age: 8-12

  Summary
  A spoiled princess makes a bargain with a frog: If he finds her golden ball at the bottom of the well, she will let him be her companion, eat off her golden plate, and drink from her golden cup. Unknown to the princess, the frog is in reality a prince under a witch’s spell. The kindness of the princess is needed to break the spell. However, as soon as the princess has her ball, she runs off to the palace. When the frog appears at the palace to remind the princess of her bargain, the king orders her to keep her promise. She does so reluctantly. The spell is finally broken (in a variety of ways, depending on the version), and the frog turns back into a prince who takes her to his kingdom to be his bride. (Heining, B. R., 1993)

- “Three Billy Goats Gruff”

  Place recommended: in a forest area.

  Equipment: none

  Age: 6-10

  Summary
  Three goats from the Gruff family, who want to eat in a meadow on the other side of a bridge, must outwit a troll who threatens to eat them up. (Heining, B. R., 1993)

- “Snow White”

  Place recommended: in a forest area.

  Equipment: none

  Age: 6-12
Summary: (Heining, B. R., 1993)

A young princess is forced into hiding when her stepmother, the queen, becomes so jealous of the princess’s beauty that the stepmother is determined to kill the princess. Snow White, as the princess is called, finds a home with seven dwarfs who mine gold for a living. The queen, through the aid of a magic mirror, finds where Snow White is hiding. Disguising herself as an old peddler woman, the queen eventually succeeds in poisoning Snow White with an apple. The dwarfs, who cannot bear to put her in the ground, place her in a glass coffin. A prince discovers her and begs the dwarfs to let him take her to his castle. As his servants carry the coffin away, the apple is dislodged from her throat and Snow White is returned to life. She marries the prince, and the wicked queen is forced to dance in red-hot iron shoes until she dies.

- “The Three Little Pigs”

Place recommended: in a field or forest area.

Equipment: none

Age: 6-10

Summary: (Heining, B. R., 1993)
Three pigs leave home to seek their fortune. The first builds a house of straw; the second, sticks; and the third, bricks. A wolf blows down the first two houses and eats the pigs. When he can’t blow down the brick house, the wolf tries to trick the pig to come out of the house. But the third pig is too clever and outwits the wolf at his own game.

- “Little Red Riding Hood”

Place recommended: in a forest area.

Equipment: none

Age: 6-12

Summary: (Heining, B. R., 1993)
A little girl is sent to her grandma’s house with a basket of treats. On the way she meets a wolf and tells him of her plans. He takes a shortcut to the grandma’s house, eats her up, dresses in her bedclothes. Red Riding Hood arrives and is puzzled by her grandma’s looks. She questions the wolf, who pops out of bed and eats her up also. A passing woodcutter cuts the wolf’s stomach and lets the girl and her grandmother out.
Aesop’s fables

Almost all Aesop’s fables are recommended for playing outdoors. Below are some examples.

Note for the teacher: Take advantage of the moral that each Aesop’s fable teaches and lead a discussion about it.

- “The North Wind and the Sun”

Place recommended: in any outdoor area

Equipment: none

Age: 6-10

The story: (web.1)

The North Wind boasted of great strength. The Sun argued that there was great power in gentleness.
"We shall have a contest," said the Sun.
Far below, a man traveled a winding road. He was wearing a warm winter coat.
"As a test of strength," said the Sun, "Let us see which of us can take the coat off of that man."
"It will be quite simple for me to force him to remove his coat," bragged the Wind.
The Wind blew so hard, the birds clung to the trees. The world was filled with dust and leaves. But the harder the wind blew down the road, the tighter the shivering man clung to his coat.
Then, the Sun came out from behind a cloud. Sun warmed the air and the frosty ground. The man on the road unbuttoned his coat.
The sun grew slowly brighter and brighter.
Soon the man felt so hot, he took off his coat and sat down in a shady spot.
"How did you do that?" said the Wind.
"It was easy," said the Sun, "I lit the day. Through gentleness I got my way."

- “The Tortoise and the Hare”

Place recommended: in a forest area.

Equipment: none

Age: 6-10

The Story (web.2)

There once was a speedy hare who bragged about how fast he could run. Tired of hearing him boast, Slow and Steady, the tortoise, challenged him to a race. All the animals in the forest gathered to watch. Hare ran down the road for a while and then and paused to rest. He looked back at Slow and Steady and cried out, "How do you expect to win this race when you are walking along at your slow, slow pace?" Hare
stretched himself out alongside the road and fell asleep, thinking, "There is plenty of
time to relax." Slow and Steady walked and walked. He never, ever stopped until he
came to the finish line. The animals who were watching cheered so loudly for
Tortoise, they woke up Hare. Hare stretched and yawned and began to run again, but
it was too late. Tortoise was over the line. After that, Hare always reminded himself,
"Don't brag about your lightning pace, for Slow and Steady won the race!"

- **"The Boy who Cried Wolf"**

**Place recommended:** in a forest area.

**Equipment:** none  
**Age:** 6-10

**The Story**

There once was a shepherd boy who was bored as he sat on the hillside watching the
village sheep. To amuse himself he took a great breath and sang out, "Wolf! Wolf!
The Wolf is chasing the sheep!" The villagers came running up the hill to help the
boy drive the wolf away. But when they arrived at the top of the hill, they found no
wolf. The boy laughed at the sight of their angry faces. "Don't cry 'wolf', shepherd
boy," said the villagers, "when there's no wolf!" They went grumbling back down the
hill. Later, the boy sang out again, "Wolf! Wolf! The wolf is chasing the sheep!" To
his naughty delight, he watched the villagers run up the hill to help him drive the
wolf away. When the villagers saw no wolf they sternly said, "Save your frightened
song for when there is really something wrong! Don't cry 'wolf' when there is NO
wolf!" But the boy just grinned and watched them go grumbling down the hill once
more. Later, he saw a REAL wolf prowling about his flock. Alarmed, he leaped to
his feet and sang out as loudly as he could, "Wolf! Wolf!" But the villagers thought
he was trying to fool them again, and so they didn't come. At sunset, everyone
wondered why the shepherd boy hadn't returned to the village with their sheep. They
went up the hill to find the boy. They found him weeping. "There really was a wolf
here! The flock has scattered! I cried out, "Wolf!" Why didn't you come?" An old
man tried to comfort the boy as they walked back to the village. "We'll help you look
for the lost sheep in the morning," he said, putting his arm around the youth,
"Nobody believes a liar...even when he is telling the truth!"

- **"The Lion and the Mouse"**

**Place recommended:** in a forest area or any outdoor area

**Equipment:** none  
**Age:** 6-10
The Story (web.1)

A small mouse crept up to a sleeping lion. The mouse admired the lion's ears, his long whiskers and his great mane. "Since he's sleeping," thought the mouse, "he'll never suspect I'm here!" With that, the little mouse climbed up onto the lion's tail, ran across its back, slid down its leg and jumped off of its paw. The lion awoke and quickly caught the mouse between its claws. "Please," said the mouse, "let me go and I'll come back and help you someday." The lion laughed, "You are so small! How could ever help me?" The lion laughed so hard he had to hold his belly! The mouse jumped to freedom and ran until she was far, far away. The next day, two hunters came to the jungle. They went to the lion's lair. They set a huge rope snare. When the lion came home that night, he stepped into the trap. He roared! He wept! But he couldn't pull himself free. The mouse heard the lion's pitiful roar and came back to help him. The mouse eyed the trap and noticed the one thick rope that held it together. She began nibbling and nibbling until the rope broke. The lion was able to shake off the other ropes that held him tight. He stood up free again! The lion turned to the mouse and said, "Dear friend, I was foolish to ridicule you for being small. You helped me by saving my life after all!"

- "The Fox and the Crow"

Place recommended: in a forest area or any outdoor area

Equipment: none

Age: 6-10

The Story (web.1)

Summary: There once was a big black crow sitting high up in the trees. In his beak he had a nice, round cheese. Along came a fox, as clever as they come, "Mmmm," he thought. "I'd like to have a bite of that cheese. It will be easy to get some...." "Oh crow," called fox, "if your voice is half as beautiful as those fine feathers I see, it would please my ears to hear you sing a little melody!" Well, crow had never heard anyone say such a complimentary thing. So, he opened up his beak and he began to squawk and sing. Down fell the cheese into the waiting mouth of the fox below. "Oh no!" squawked the crow, "you've stolen my dinner!" "Not at all!" said the fox, licking his lips. "It was a fair enough trade! Vain crow, with your head up in the trees! You got the compliments, and I got the cheese!"
Stories from other cultures

It is a good idea to work on those stories during study units on different countries.

- “The Two Foolish Cats” – a fairy tale from Japan.

Place recommended: in a forest area.

Equipment: none

Age: 6-10

The Story: (Mc Caslin, 2006; 164)
There were once two cats who lived together in peace and harmony. They were good friends sharing food and shelter. One day, however, each of them came upon a fresh, sweet rice cake on a path leading into woods. Delighted with their discoveries, they showed their cakes to each other, comparing them for size and freshness. Now, it happened that the larger of the two cats had picked up the smaller rice cake. “This is not fair”, he said. “I am larger than you and therefore I should have the larger cake. Come, let us trade.” But the smaller cat refused. “No, I am smaller than you and I need more food so I can grow to your size, I wouldn’t think of trading”

Well, this led to an argument, each cat insisting that he should have the larger of the two cakes. They accused each other of greediness, and as they grew angrier they began to growl and spit. The argument went on for some time, neither one willing to give in to the other. Finally the bigger cat said, “Let us stop. We will get nowhere fighting like this. Let us go find the wise monkey who lives in the forest. If we ask him to divide our cakes equally, we shall each have our fair share and our argument will be over.”

The smaller cat agreed, for he was hungry and wanted to eat his cake. So, the two took themselves off to the forest to find the wise monkey. They looked in the bushes and treetops, around rocks and behind the trunks of the trees, until at last they found him. They explained what they wanted, but the old monkey replied that he needed to hear each side of the argument. The bigger cat began. Then the wise monkey said, “Stop, let me hear the other.” The smaller cat spoke up. When he had finished, the old monkey nodded his head gravely. “I think I can solve your problem. Give me the rice cakes.” The cats handed them over eagerly. The monkey took one in each hand and weighed them with care. “Yes”, he said, “this one is heavier. Let me take a bite out of it. Then, they will be the same size.”

But, he took a very big bite and what had been the larger cake now became the smaller. “Dear, dear,” said the monkey, “I shall have to take a bite out of this cake to even things up.”

As you can imagine, he again took a large bite and the first cake became the larger. Paying no attention to the cats, who were anxiously watching their cakes disappear, the old monkey went from one to the other until both cakes were gone.

“Well,” he said, “you asked me to solve your problem, and I have done it. Without the cakes you have nothing to quarrel about.” Whereupon he went off, leaving the two cats hungry and feeling very foolish indeed. But never did they quarrel again!
There is a lesson in the above story and the teacher can lead a discussion of greed and fair play.

- “The Fir tree who wanted leaves”- a German tale.

Place recommended: a forest area or any area with trees

Equipment: none

Age: 6-12

The Story: (web.2)
A long time ago, so long ago that if I had been there then I wouldn’t be here now to tell you this story now, there was a forest. And in the middle of that forest there was a little fir tree. He was small and he had thin short green leaves that were prickly. Except he didn’t like his prickly green leaves. He wanted to be like the other trees with their broad green leaves. As the wind whispered through the forest, their leaves rustled and the little tree was sure they were saying, “Look at that little tree with his short, thin prickly leaves. Doesn’t he look funny?”

“Oh, I wish. . . . I wish. . . .” said the little fir tree. “I wish that I had leaves of gold. Then I would be beautiful and then all the other trees wouldn’t laugh at me.”

Now it so happened that a fairy was walking. . . or strolling. . . or flying through the forest—whatever it is that a fairy does in her free time. And she heard the little tree’s wish.

The fairy looked at the little tree standing there in the middle of all the other trees. He looked courageous and vulnerable. The fairy smiled. “Little tree, little tree,” she said, “you shall have your wish.”

And in the morning when the golden rays of the sun shone over the mountain, the little pine tree looked down. “His leaves—they were all shiny and gold!” He stood up straight and tall in his glory and he was sure that the other trees whispered, “Look at the little tree. Isn’t he beautiful?” It was almost noon when a man came traveling through the forest. He stopped and stared at the little tree. “Oh,” he said and “Oh!” again. He picked every one of those golden leaves from the little tree!” He whistled a happy song as he hurried away with his bag of treasure.

The little tree looked down at his bare branches. “Oh,” he said, “maybe that wasn’t such a good wish after all. I wish. . . . I wish. . . .” The little tree happened to see a discarded bottle on the forest floor. It caught the rays of the sun and sparkled. “Oh,” said the little tree, “maybe I should have wished for leaves of glass. Leaves of glass would be beautiful and people who are traveling through the forest wouldn’t want them. I wish I had leaves of glass.”

Now it so happened that that fairy was walking. . . or strolling. . . or flying through the forest—whatever it is that fairies do in their spare time. And in the kindness of her heart she said, “Little tree, little tree. You shall have your wish.”

And in the morning the little tree woke up as the sun came up over the mountain. Its rays fell upon the little tree and it glistened and sparkled in the sunshine. “Oh,” said the little tree, “my leaves are beautiful.” And as the breeze wandered through the forest the other trees whispered about how beautiful the little tree was. His leaves shimmered and tinkled in the breeze. As the sun set, the little tree again looked
down at his leaves. They shimmered with pink and yellow and golden colors. He was happy.
The forest became dark and quiet. A storm came. Whoosh! The glass leaves of the little tree crashed against each other and shattered in crystal shards upon the forest floor. “Oh!” said the little fir tree. “Every leaf is gone. Now the other trees will laugh at me again. Maybe glass leaves wasn’t a good thing to wish for. I wish... I wish that I had broad green leaves like all the other trees. If I were just like them, they wouldn’t laugh at me.”
Now it so happened that the fairy was visiting the forest again and she heard the little tree. “Little tree, little tree,” she whispered, “you shall have your wish.”
In the morning the little tree looked down. There they were—beautiful broad green leaves. “I am just like the other trees,” he whispered as the gentle breeze wafted through the forest. “Now no one will laugh at me.”
The sun was high overhead when a goat came wandering through the forest. “Mmm, lunch,” said the goat. The other trees lifted up their branches but the little fir tree was too small. Crunch. Munch. The goat crunched and munched until every leaf was gone and the little tree was bare once again.
“Oh no,” said the little tree. “Maybe that wasn’t such a good wish either. I wish... Oh, I wish I could have my own thin prickly leaves back again.”
The kind fairy, who was out walking or strolling or flying—whatever, stopped. “Good wish!” she said. “Little tree, little tree. You shall have your wish.”
In the morning when the little tree woke up and looked down at his branches, they were covered with thin, prickly leaves.” “Oh,” said the little tree laughing aloud for joy. The other trees whispered in the breeze and it was all right. The little tree lifted his branches proudly. “I have my own green prickly leaves again and they are beautiful and just right for me. Being myself is the best thing to be.”

There is a lesson in the above story and the teacher can lead a discussion of discontent and dissatisfaction with one’s lot.

- “A Bell for Ursli”- a story from Switzerland.

**Place recommended**: any outdoor area

**Equipment**: bells

**Age**: 8-12

**The story**: (McCaslin, 1987; 229)

It is the custom in some Swiss villages for the children to ring bells one morning in March to call an end to the long winter and herald the coming of spring. One morning, a little boy named Ursli heard that this was the day that Uncle John, an old and beloved neighbor, would be giving out the bells. So, he went with the other children to get one. When he arrived, the bigger boys pushed in ahead of him, and all that was left for Ursli was a tiny bell with almost no sound.
Disappointed, Ursli started home. Suddenly, he remembered the great bell that hung in the dining room of his family’s mountain home. How could he get it? The house had been closed for the winter. The snow was still lying in drifts, and the streams were frozen. Nevertheless, he started out, making his way up and up to the very top
of the mountain. When he finally arrived, he was so tired that he ate some of the hard bread the Swiss keep through the winter, and then he fell fast asleep. During the night, the animals some deer and a fox, peered through the windows to see who had come to the empty house.

Meanwhile, Ursli’s parents were greatly worried and went from cottage to cottage in the village, asking if anyone had seen their son. No one had. By morning, however, Ursli appeared with the big bell he had managed to carry down the dangerous paths over the mountain. His parents warned him never to go there again in the winter weather, but they were so glad to have him safe at home that they did not punish him. As for Ursli, he was just in time to join the other children on the village square, where he proudly rang the bell that he had carried down the mountain all by himself.

- “Prometheus” – a Greek myth

**Place recommended:** in a forest area.

**Equipment:** none

**Age:** 6-10

**The Story:** (web.3)

In Greek mythology, Prometheus was the creator of mankind. The goddess Athene taught him architecture, astronomy, mathematics, navigation, medicine, and metallurgy, and he in turn taught them to humans. Zeus, the chief of the Greek gods, became angry at Prometheus for making people powerful by teaching them all these useful skills.

When the gods chose Prometheus as arbiter in a dispute, he fooled the gullible Zeus into picking the worst parts of the sacrificial bull by hiding them under a rich layer of fat. To punish Prometheus, Zeus withheld fire from men. "Let them eat their flesh raw," he declared. In response, Prometheus, snuck up to Mount Olympus, lit a torch from the sun, and hid a burning piece of charcoal in a hollow stalk. He slipped away with it and thus delivered fire to mankind.

Zeus, as revenge, tried unsuccessfully to trick Prometheus' brother, Epimetheus, into accepting the beautiful but mischievous Pandora as a gift. Epimetheus, mindful of earlier advice from his brother, refused. Even madder now that his trick had failed, Zeus had Prometheus chained naked to a pillar in the Caucasian mountains. A griffon-vulture ate at Prometheus' liver all day long. During the bitter cold of the mountain night, the liver became whole again.

So it went day after day, year after year. Epimetheus married Pandora in an effort to free his brother. Pandora -- as devilish as she was beautiful -- opened the famous box in which Prometheus had shut up all the evils that might plague mankind -- Old Age, Labor, Sickness, Insanity, Vice and Passion.

Only years later, at the behest of Heracles (Hercules), did Zeus free Prometheus.

A discussion about human qualities and feelings is suggested to follow.
A list of other stories from different cultures recommended

- “The Little Scarecrow Boy”
- “The Carlanco and the goats”- a folk tale from Spain
- “The Shining Fish”- a folk tale from Italy.
- “Jack and his animals”- An Irish Tale
- “Bluebonnets”- a Native American legend.
- “A legend of Spring”- an American Indian legend
- “Bimi”- a tale from Bahamas
- “How the Soldier Crab got his name”-a folk tale of Bahamas.
- “The Wise Old Woman” – a Japanese folk tale
- “The first night of sleep” – based on an African myth.

(2) Using a specific component of a story for drama
(Heining, B. R., 1993)

Age: 6-12

Objectives:

The children through using several drama activities are supposed:

- To examine a story very closely, improving their comprehension and understanding.
- To examine life from various viewpoints by role playing different characters and express themselves in those roles.
- To use outdoor environments in a creative way.

Description:

Work on one story with all the students using specific components of the story for role-playing.

The following is an example of some activities related to the story “The frog prince”. You are suggested to use the same kind of drama activities for other stories as well.
The frog prince

Activities recommended:

1. Solo pantomime activities – All the children should act out in pantomime each component
   - You are the princess, playing with your favorite toy, a golden ball. You throw it up in the air and catch it again. Whoops, you dropped it! Try to grab for it! Missed! There it goes, into the well. You try to see it in the deep water, but it’s gone for good. Too bad. Not only was it beautiful, it was very valuable. You sit at the edge of the well. Show how you feel. As I count slowly to three, show what you might do next.
   - You are the frog who has made the long journey by yourself to the palace to find the princess and make her keep her bargain with you. It has taken you an entire day and you are exhausted. Now, you have managed to do this. Don’t forget that you have to knock at the door now that you’ve reached the top.
   - You are the princess. Your father has ordered you to keep your promise to the frog, who has just asked to accompany you to your room. You pick him up with two fingers and carry him to your room. Show by your facial expression and the way you hold him how much you detest him. When you get to your room, put him in a corner so you won’t have to look at him. What else can you do to hide him from view?
   - You are the frog. The princess has just kissed you on the cheek and you change into a prince. Do this in slow motion to the count of ten.

2. Solo verbal activity- All the children should try and act out the scene using words.
   - You are the frog and have just retrieved the princess’s golden ball. She has run off to the palace without taking you with her. Call to her in your croaky voice. One by one, let’s hear what you would say.

3. Paired Pantomime Activities- In pairs the children act out in pantomime the following scenes
   - The frog and the princess eat dinner off the same golden plate. The frog enjoys his meal immensely, but the princess is having problems carrying out her end of the bargain. Let’s see some of this scene, which ends when the frog has had his fill.
   - The frog wants to play games with the princess. Besides throwing and catching a ball, pantomime some other games they could play. Remember the size difference and make any needed adjustments.
4. **Paired Verbal Activities** - In pairs the children act out the following scenes using words:

- The king questions the princess about her distress after answering the door and shutting it again. He wants to know who is at the door. She tries not to tell the story about the frog, but must give her father some answer that will satisfy him. What will she say? Will he believe her?
- The frog wishes to go sightseeing in the palace and asks the princess to guide him. She obliges only because the frog threatens to tell her father of she doesn’t. Let’s see a little of this scene, with the princess trying to cut the tour short and the frog wanting to see every nook and cranny. He also asks a lot of questions.

(3) **Story telling through movement - Set in the outdoors**

**Age:** 6-12

**Objectives:**

- To encourage creative movement through acting a story.
- To use outdoor environments in a creative way.

1. **The legend of the shooting star** (Mc Caslin, 2006; 63)

**Description:**

This legend offers an opportunity to learn about the Indians of the Southwestern US. It can also be part of a social-studies unit, in which the legends as well as the habits, clothing, homes, and land in which people lived are discussed. It is a good idea to experiment with different rhythms, letting the group suggest movements for Coyote and the stars. When the class is ready, read the story aloud very slowly, and the legend can be danced or played in its entirety. Even though the story of Coyote can be danced by any number of children, it is a good idea to use no more than 12 or 14 and repeat it several times with different children being Coyote. There is no right or wrong way to do it, for it is the story that is important. It can be told in many different ways, but dancing it is one of the most effective. It is a good idea to break the class into two or three groups.

**THE STORY**

Many moons ago, Coyote was a great dancer.
More than anything else, Coyote loved to dance.
More than fishing, more than hunting, more than running through the hills, Coyote loved to dance.
Coyote was a dancer.
At night, Coyote looked up into the sky and watched the stars dancing.
I should like to dance with the stars, thought Coyote.
One night, Coyote climbed to the top of the highest hill.
“I want to dance with you”, Coyote called to the stars, but the stars only laughed.
“But I am a great dancer,” called Coyote. The stars laughed again.
“How can we dance with you if we’re up in the sky and you are down on earth?”
“Let me dance with you,” Coyote cried.
Suddenly, the North Star had an idea. “I will throw this rope down to earth and pull Coyote up into the sky.”
Coyote caught the rope, and the stars pulled Coyote into the sky.
They began dancing together.
The stars danced very quickly. Soon Coyote grew tired. “I want to stop!” cried Coyote, but the stars danced faster and faster.
Coyote tried to climb onto the back of one of the stars, but his paw slipped and he fell to earth instead…and made a great hole in the ground.
To this day, whenever you see a shooting star, it is really Coyote falling to Earth.

2. **The Bat’s choice** (McCaslin, 2006; 64)

**Description:**

This tale is from India and can be used as part of a social-studies unit about India. This legend lends itself equally well to dance and mime. Also, the story can be improvised by adding dialogue in it. Another way would be to have a narrator tell it while the group pantomimes the action. The tale can be told first in movement and then retold with the addition of animal voices. After playing the story, it is a good idea to compare the bat’s behavior to the behavior of human beings, who shift their positions from one side to another.

**THE STORY**

In India they tell why the bat hides by day and comes only at night. Many, many years ago there was a war between the birds and the animals. The bat, who had wings like a bird but a body like an animal, watched them fight but could not make up his mind which side to join. Finally, he decided he would go to the winning side. That appeared to be the animals, so he went over to them, declaring his everlasting loyalty.

Then, suddenly things changed. With the help of the eagle, the birds began to overcome the animals. Now the bat wondered whether he had made a mistake; perhaps he would be better off with the birds. Until he could be sure, however, he hid in a tree and watched. When peace was finally reached, the bat found himself unpopular with both sides. And so it is to this day that he hides in a tree by day and comes out at night, when the birds and most of the animals are asleep.
(4) Improvisation in outdoor environments

Age: 9-12

Objectives:

- To increase students’ skills in improvisation in outdoor situations.
- To enhance children’s creativity and imagination.
- To use outdoor environments in a creative way.

Description:

Choose an outdoor environment where children can improvise in different scenes. Below there are some ways for working on improvisation in outdoor settings.

- **Improvisations suggested by outdoor settings.**
  A good activity for this is “Freeze” where two students start improvising a scene suggested by the specific outdoor environment they are in while the rest of the students are sitting and watching. The two students act out the scene until someone (most likely the teacher) shouts “freeze”. Then, they “freeze” and the teacher chooses a new person to get up and take the place and posture of the replaced character. *They start out on a new completely different story inspired out of the postures they started with and the setting they are in.*

- **Improvisations suggested by objects and outdoor settings. (combine previous 2 activities)**
  You can use the activity described above but can add an object(s) (try to find something interesting for the children) which combined with the outdoor setting will be the basis of all of the improvisations the students create.

- **Improvisations suggested by costumes and outdoor settings**
  The same activity can be done by using costumes or different kinds of clothes like a scarf, a hat and so on.

(5) Listen to Nature!

Place recommended: a quiet natural environment

Equipment: papers and colored pencils for all the students

Age: 9-12

Objectives:

- To gain sensory experiences from being in nature.
To express feelings.
To cooperate and create a drama suggested by the group feelings.
To use outdoor environments in a creative way

Description:
Guide the class in a natural environment and ask them to use their senses and listen to nature. Then divide the class in groups of about 6 students each. Each group takes 1 piece of paper for each member and colored pencils as well. They then select a setting they like in the area (Don’t forget to set boundaries in the area). Each student on his/her own draws on the piece of paper what nature makes him/her feel using the colors he/she likes. When everyone in the group finishes, they sit in a circle and put the papers in the middle. The teacher then suggests a group discussion about the pictures (what each picture means to its creator) within the group. After that, each group creates a story by connecting the pictures. Instruct the students that afterward they will be asked to act out the story in front of the whole group. When all the groups are ready, they will start presenting their work (preferably at the place they had chosen). After all groups have presented their drama, gather the students in a circle and ask them how they felt during the activity and discuss different feelings and perspectives.

Variations: After everyone in the group finishes his/her picture and all the pictures are gathered together. Each member has to write behind the other drawings (not his own) what he understands about it. Afterwards, the comments are read aloud. According to the comments, each group prepares a short drama.

(6) Be an Animal!  (Cornell, 1998)

Place recommended: a zoo, a farm or a wilderness area

Equipment: none

Age: 6-12

Objectives:

- To learn about animals in an inspired and experiential way.
- To use outdoor environments creatively

Description:
This activity can be part of the curriculum when studying about animals. It is a good idea to visit a zoo, a farm, or a wilderness area with children where they can see real, live animals. Tell the group that you are going to be mimicking the animals later so that they must observe them closely. If you are unable to visit live animals, you can discuss with the children about animals and show them some pictures as well. Afterwards choose quite large place around the area and divide the group in pairs. Tell each pair secretly the name of an animal they have seen. Each pair has to act out
their animal’s typical behavior, one pair at a time. It is recommended to designate an area as the “stage” and have each pair come forward to perform, rather than do their act wherever they are standing (unless the students need a certain area for their setting).

When a pair comes on stage to act out their animal, tell them to visualize their animal in their mind first, then capture the animal’s essence in a still pose. After they have held the pose for eight seconds, tell them to move around like the animal. To end their performance, they can, if they wish, make the animal’s sounds: warbling, braying, and so on. The other players guess what the animal is. It’s very important to let the player finish his “act” before calling out names.

(7) The Lion King’s Court  (web.4)

Place recommended: a forest, a field or any natural environment.

Equipment: none

Age: 6-12

Objectives:

- To learn about animals in a creative and experiential way.
- To get animals’ perspectives by being animals in their natural environment.
- To work in the outdoors in a creative way

Description:

Introduce the activity like this: "Everyone knows the Lion is King of the Jungle. But every good King needs a court. A King needs to have people around him who are his friends, whom he can trust and upon whom he can rely. These people are called courtiers. What qualities should courtiers possess?"

A discussion will follow. Students may suggest qualities such as "strong," and "brave," and "helpful." They may also say the words "kind," and "loyal," and "clever." After the group accepts each new adjective, ask them to think about which animals exemplify each quality. (For example, elephants are strong and helpful, dogs are devoted and brave, cats are clever and cunning, horses are loyal and helpful, etc.)

Discuss the sort of animals who would make good courtiers until a fairly sizeable list has been generated.

Next, tell students that we will now act out the selection of the King’s court. Each student chooses an animal to portray. (It need not necessarily be one that was mentioned earlier, although of course most will be.) The teacher, in role as the King, calls each "animal" forward. "You, animal. Come forward into the presence of the King." The animal moves forward. "What sort of animal are you?" The student announces what animal he or she is portraying. With older students it is possible for you to ask them to use an appropriate animal voice. "Why should I have a (blank) in my court?"
The student then describes the qualities of her/his animal that make that animal good courtier material. The King responds, "Wonderful! You may join my court." It is recommended to have an area defined, around the King, for the "court," so that the students can physically enter his court. Obviously everyone must be invited to join—even snakes.

You can end this session by having a parade of the King's court, with each animal moving according to its way. Then the whole group "roars"—each according to species—to announce the presence of the greatest Royal court in the land.

Variation: Studying the oceans, I did a version of this game called "The Sea King's Court." Each student became a sea animal. You could try it with older kids using real historical figures—from any era—and a mythical human King—or Queen.

(8) Forest Meeting – Environmental Awareness (Cornell, 1998)

Place recommended: an area close to water.

Equipment: none

Age: 9-12

Objectives:

• To get different perspectives on a subject from several points of view
• To learn the benefits and negatives of building dams in rivers
• To state an opinion and find ways to defend it.
• To use outdoor environments for learning, experiencing, and debating

Description:

• Lead a discussion about dams, why people build them, what are the benefits, the negatives and so on.
• Introduce the students to the public meeting being held in the specific area with the problem whether to build a dam on the certain river. Representatives come to the meeting—a farmer, a fisherman, a trout, a salmon, a deer, a poplar tree, a water boatman, a kingfisher, a midge, and any others who should be consulted. (Give the students roles written on a small piece of paper) Then let the children move in the place taking their roles and gather them together for the meeting. Each one will have to state his opinion on the building of the dam from his point of view as a farmer, a deer and so on. You can give each student a different role if there are not so many students or divide the students in groups where each group has its own meeting.

Variation: This activity can be done with any number of environmental issues: cutting down trees for human use, air or water pollution, building a new housing
development or mall, cars/roads, water rights and use, hunting, over-fishing, landfills, or any other local and pertinent issue.

(9) An Apple Tree Grows. (web. 4)

Place recommended: a quiet natural environment

Equipment: none

Age: 6-12

Objectives:

• To understand the procedure of growth of plants.
• To contract and stretch the entire body
• To use their imagination
• To use outdoor environments for experiencing lifecycles

Description:

Be sure to narrate this story slowly enough, and with appropriate pauses, so that the students are able to fully experience their own physical discoveries as they enact the story.

• Everyone find your own personal space in the area and make yourself as small as possible.
• You are an apple seed, crammed tightly into your hard seed pod, and buried under the cold ground. It is winter, and you are barely awake. Above you, snow covers the ground. It is totally dark under the ground.
• Now it is spring. The earth around you is growing a little warmer, and you start to feel more awake. The snow above you melts and the water soaks into the earth around you. It feels good. The earth feels warmer, and you seem to be able to pull energy out of the soil.
• It is time to come out of your seed pod. You feel strong and energetic. Using all your strength, you push up against your seed pod and break through, like a bird breaks out of the egg. You reach upwards into the warm earth with your tendrills. The earth around you is moist, and you soak in the life-giving moisture. You don't know why, but you know you want to push upwards.
• Finally, with one great push, you emerge from the soil and see, for the first time, the SUN!
• The sun's energy flows into you and you feel stronger and stronger. You stretch upwards and outwards until you are a healthy seedling. The gentle spring rains nourish and refresh you. Just take a moment to enjoy it.
• (Take a longer pause here.)
• Now let’s move ahead a few years. You have grown into a strong young sapling--a tree about the size of a young person. You have beautiful green leaves that soak up the sun and make you strong. But you want to grow taller. You want to be a tree. So you summon all your energy and you push
out and up. As the years go by you become a strong, handsome apple tree. You stand proud in the sun and enjoy your own strength and beauty.

- Now it is fall. You have grown succulent, nourishing apples all over your strong branches. The apples contain seeds which might someday become new apple trees. The apples are heavy. Your branches are strong, but there are so many apples. You feel weighed down. You feel as if your branches might break.
- Here come some children. You can't talk to them, but you know they are coming for the apples. They have bushel baskets. They are laughing and singing. The children pick your apples, and your branches feel light. You know they will take them away and eat them. You know they will throw away the seeds, and that some of those seeds might grow to be new apple trees.
- Almost all of your apples are gone. But you know you will grow more next year. You feel grateful to those children. You hope they will enjoy the apples.
- (Take a longer pause here.)
- Now it is winter. All of your leaves have fallen. But you know you will grow more next spring. Now it is time to rest. You rest.

After the exercise, tell the students to sit in a circle and lead the discussion about what had happened during the exercise and how they felt in different stages.

(10) Traveling Back in Time

Place recommended: In an outdoor historical area

Equipment: clothes and several other items of people in older times

Age: 6-12

Objectives:

- To learn about history by role-playing
- To feel how lives was in older and compare it with their life now.
- To use outdoor environments for discovery and historical perspective

Description:

Guide the children in an outdoor area that could have been used in older times. Help them imagine how it was like to live in these times. That can be done by using “teacher in role”. The teacher will take the role of a person representative of life in that time. Then tell the students that they will enter a time machine and travel back in time to that period in history. Divide them into groups and give them roles that they will act out when they come out of the machine. They can use clothes and items relevant to people of those times. Give them different scenarios on which they will develop their plot. Afterwards they will present their dramas in front of the whole class.
Variation: After giving the children their roles, they can improvise and create scenarios on their own or you may give them some clue words that will help stimulate their ideas.

(11) Bringing History Alive

Place recommended: At a castle or any historical building

Equipment: clothes and several other items that people used to use in older times

Age: 6-12

Objectives:

- To learn about history by role-playing.
- To feel how life was in older times and how people were living in that historical building.
- To use outdoor environments to expand imagination

Description:

Visit with the students an old castle or another historical building. Take a role (perhaps a person who was living in that building) and introduce the students in the history of this place. Guide them in the building and help them imagine how life was in older times. During the tour ask them questions about how they think people were living in that building and so on.

Then divide the students into teams of about 5 persons in each one. Give a scenario in each team based on the history of the place. Then each team works on the scenario and creates a drama enacting events in life of people living there.

Variation: Make a play related to the building and its history using all the children. Afterwards the children can perform their play in front of an audience.

(12) Life in a Village

Place recommended: the square or any large area of a village

Equipment: a supply of garments (aprons, scarves, hats, long skirts, shawls, work gloves and different other kinds of clothes that people from villages used to wear in older times

Age: 6-12
Objectives:

- To learn about a village, its customs and traditions, the lifestyle of the people living there and so on.
- To feel, by getting in role, how people live in villages and compare that with their lives.
- To use outdoor environments for experiencing lifestyles

Description:

Visit a village and discuss with the students the history of the village and the life of people there. Let them compare their lives with the lives of people in the village. What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in a village? You can lead the discussion by getting a role (teacher in role) as a local in the village.

After the discussion and a walk around the village, gather the students in the centre of the village or in a large outdoor area. Tell them that they are going to pretend to be inhabitants in this village. It is Saturday morning in the village and usually there is a big outdoor market in this place where different people come and sell products. Farmers sell their vegetables, women come and sell home made handicrafts, and fishermen sell fish and so on.

Then divide the students into groups of about 6 and tell them to work together choosing their roles and creating a short drama based on the above scenario. Later each group will present their drama to the larger group. It will be a good idea if the students can use different kind of garments (aprons, scarves, hats, long skirts, shawls, work gloves) to make their enactments more real.

Variation: Another good idea is to find a local person who will talk to the students about the village and its special customs and traditions or about a legend or interesting story related to the village. You can use the experience to create a drama activity for the students during their trip or when they return.

(13) Rituals (web. 4)

Place recommended: a field or forest area

Equipment: none

Age: 9-12

Objectives:

- To support Social Studies unit on early man or world history survey
- To encourage children’s creativity
- To use outdoor environments to stimulate young minds
Firstly, begin by discussing the concept of ritual. Then, ask the children to try to list some things that early humans might have feared, and that they might have created rituals to ward off. Then ask them to say some rituals we use today. Try to help them consider the way ritual functions in their own lives and the way it might have functioned in the lives of ancient man. Today's rituals (in most familiar religions and cultures) tend to be somewhat nebulous in purpose--becoming a man, or becoming a Christian, for example, are not really cut-and-dry events. But some rituals have very specific purposes. A Native American rain dance, for example, was intended to cause the specific result of rain. Early people may have had rituals intended to ward off evil spirits or to placate the dead, but they probably also had rituals intended to achieve quite specific physical goals--success in a particular hunt or battle, for example.

After the discussion, each student works independently to find his own original ritual. This may be a ritual that applies to the life of early humans or one that applies to the life of a contemporary student. It may be intended to cause a specific event-- success in the buffalo hunt; an "A" on the math test, or to achieve an imprecise goal such as "becoming a man." However, there must be a clear, easily expressed purpose for the ritual. Each student rehearses his or her ritual until it is clear and consistent. Afterwards, with the rest of the class serving as audience, each person in turn "performs" his or her ritual. The class must try to figure out what the specific purpose of the ritual is. (four or five guesses).

(14) The discovery of fire (web.4)

Place recommended: a field or forest area

Equipment: none

Age: 9-12

Objectives:

- To support Social Studies unit on prehistoric culture
- Problem solving
- To use outdoor environments as a tool for new experiences.

Description:

Begin the discussion with the question, "What were some of the most important technological or cultural innovations of the earliest humans?" Wait until they say "fire". If not help them. Then tell the students that today you will be working on a project that deals with the discovery of fire. Ask them what they think were the main uses to which early humans put fire?" Finally ask them, "How do you think early humans first discovered that they could use fire?"
After the discussion, divide the class into small groups of four or five children in each one. Each group must come up with a solution to the question, "How did early humans first discover that they could harness and use fire?" They must then prepare a short skit or play which dramatizes that discovery. (In order to keep the sketches physical you can add the rule that students may not speak--or may not speak in a real language--grunts or gibberish is allowed. This forces them to use their physical skills and expressiveness to convey the plot of their scenes.) The groups, working independently, are given five or ten minutes to "rehearse" their scenes. Then, each group, in turn, "performs" their scene, with the rest of the class functioning as audience. Discuss each scene. What worked? What didn't? Did they find a plausible answer to the question? Did they convey their answer clearly?

(15) Communication

Place recommended: a field or forest area

Equipment: 4 ropes and a blue or green or red but not yellow tarp for each group

Age: 9-12

Objectives:

• To appreciate, by role playing, the importance of communication
• To address communication problems with a variety of different characters.
• To use outdoor environments for learning and scenario use

Description:

Divide the students into 3-4 groups. Each group is recommended to have around 7-8 children. Each group will work on the same scenario and will be given the same roles. Each person in the group will have a different personality trait. The following traits are recommended for the specific scenario: rushed, sarcastic, controlling, indecisive, negative, overly-positive, and off-topic. Give the students some minutes to think about their role, what words that kind of character usually says, whether they know someone with this character and so on. Then gather the students together and give them the scenario. “You are some friends going to camp on the mountains. As you are walking in the forest to find a place to camp, it starts raining. You suddenly remember that you forgot to take the tent. You need to build a shelter somewhere to protect you from rain.” Give each group the tarp and ropes and tell them that this is all they have to build a shelter for protection from the elements. They must now begin playing their roles within the scenario.

Let each group improvise on the scenario for some time while you go around and watch all groups. Then call out “Freeze”, gather the children in a circle. Ask each person how they felt about their own role and how they interacted with the group. Then ask the group which role or “personality” created the most difficulty for
accomplishing the task. What do they believe are the important communication issues when dealing with different kinds of personalities?

Then ask each group to go back and act out the same scenario but this time with a productive personality behavior (always according to their role). They should try to give more empathy and communicate better with the others. After the appropriate time gather the students again and ask if they felt something different this time, what changed the situation and so on.
References:

Books:

WebPages:

APPENDIX B – Questionnaire to teachers for evaluating the successfulness of the drama activities they did with elementary school students in outdoor settings

Research on promoting drama activities in outdoor environments for young people

Questionnaire for evaluating the successfulness of drama activities with elementary school students in outdoor settings

Type of school (for example Naturskola, friskola etc.):

Please fill out the questionnaire for each activity that you performed.

1. Name of the activity (if there was a variation please describe which one you used):

2. Age and number of the children:

3. Where did the activity take place?

4. In your mind was the activity successful? Why or why not?

5. What were the beneficial/positive effects from doing the activity in an outdoor environment? Did you encounter any problems?

6. What were the children’s reactions?

Answer the following two questions in reference to all of the activities.

1. Do you have any comments or recommendations for the activities?

2. Overall, what is your opinion about drama activities in outdoor environments?
APPENDIX C – Questionnaire to drama teachers for their opinion in doing drama activities in outdoor environments

Promoting drama activities in outdoor environments for young people

My name is Sophie Kamenou and I am having a master course in “Outdoor Environmental Education and Outdoor Life” in Linköping’s University. As part of my studies, I’m doing a research on applying drama activities in outdoor environments and I would like to know your opinion about it as a drama teacher. I would really appreciate it if you could take some time to answer the following questions. Thank you very much in advance.

Years of experience in teaching drama:

Group age you are teaching:

1. Have you ever used drama activities in outdoor environments? If yes, what kind of activities, where and what was the reason for applying them in an outdoor setting? Did you notice any difference in children’s behavior when they were participating in drama activities in outdoor environments comparing with indoor environments?

2. What do you believe are the benefits of applying drama activities in outdoor environments? Do you think there are any problems? If yes, what kind of problems?

3. Do you believe that some drama activities are better applied in outdoor environments? If yes, what kind of drama activities and why?
APPENDIX D – Pictures of observation in an elementary school
Opponent letters

1. Opponent letter from Dusan Bartunek

CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE
FACULTY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT
Department of Turistika and Outdoor Education

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REVIEW OF MASTER THESIS

Sophie Kamenou

Promoting drama activities in outdoor environments for elementary school children

This thesis is great job to connect outdoor environment and way of learning through drama activities. Drama activities as part of communication tool for education sounds be very good way for personal and social development. The work is in quite high level of quality and the time for writing was very short. Author showed her knowledge and orientation in this subject. Author knows a lot of important books as theoretical background and her aims and goals very successfully accomplished. The chapter Review of Literature and Discussion are compile sources very well. I have to say that all thesis text is very good structured and well formatted. Also the results are compile sources really good. The best benefit of thesis is booklet of 15 different part of drama activities/games as hands on practical tools for teachers and educators. Maybe could be very nice to publish this book of drama games useful in the outdoors. The games are very well structured with recommendation for age of children, preparation and description.

On the other hand there are some differences with numbers about teachers in research in methodology part and could be nice to define aim in abstract as well.

I have some question for author of thesis as answers I expect in examination time:
1) Is it possible to explain how much can those drama activities substitute common way of learning at school educational system?
2) What is the most important benefit of using those drama activities with children?

3) How much is important to be outdoors with drama activities to achieve same outcomes as run those drama activities indoors? Is it really better to use outdoor environment for that?

4) What are the main difficulties to do those drama activities for primary teachers?

5) Do they exist some connections to the others subjects at school through drama activities? /mathematic, geography, biology etc./

This thesis is finally very interesting and brings great results from very properly research and mainly collect list of drama activities and games as real practical hands on activities for teachers and educators.

Finally I recommend this thesis for examination.

Dusan Bartunek – thesis advisor

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2. Opponent letter from Kristina Thorshag

I have just had the time to do some reflections. I have not written any summarize of her thesis and I have not done any review of the literature part.

Page 21: In the part Main goals she says: This research... is valuable for teachers and generally leaders. I don’t think it is correct to tell her opinion. The sentence is very long and quite hard to read out.

Methods/ participants (p.22): I think she has to define the words “primary school” and all the other types of schools that she mentions in her thesis. It is confusing with all the different words. I think it would be better to use the ages of the children. Now it is grundskola, communal school, and ordinary school.

Measures
On the bottom of page 23 there is one sentence. It is too long, so it is hard to read out. It starts with “I choose…” and ends with “…in outdoor settings”

The questionnaire to the teachers was good and easy to understand. About the questionnaire to the drama teachers, I think that the first question is very complex. She could have divided it into a,b and c questions.

Page 25 Observation
Sophie says that the basic objective was to, among others things, see if whether being in the outdoor enhanced the activity. That must be very difficult to do without doing a comparison indoor, which she has not done.

Page 44 + 46
One teacher did the activity “Be an animal” with a group of 61 students. Why did she have such a large group? Was it possible to carry the activity out? Did she work alone?

Summary page 47
Just a reflection: The most common activity was to enact different stories and fairy tales, especially with children between 6-9 years. It is not very remarkable I think, because children in that age are very used to fairy tales. Then it is easy for the teachers to involve the children when they already know the story.

Beneficial outcomes page 49
I think it is very positive that the teachers say that the outdoor environments inspired the students since they could relate to the environment and use it in a good way.

Answers page 50
There are only 7 out of eleven who answered the last two questions on the questionnaire. Why, does she think, didn’t four of them want to answer these questions? Could she have made the questions in another way to get more answers?

It is very good to read that all the teachers are positive to do drama activities outdoors and they want to do it again!
Observations page 52- 54
In the first observation she says that the activity was very organized. Does she think it was too organized? Was it necessary to carry out all the plastic bags with material or does she think the children would have played their roles without all that?

In the second observation Sophie says that the children didn’t care about the snow and the cold. I think it is mostly adults that are concerned about the weather! Sophie says that the environment was not used for the activity. In what way could the teacher have used the environment better?

Discussion
Sophie finds many beneficial aspects of doing drama outdoors. The most important benefit she thinks is that learning becomes more alive in authentic environments. When the students are doing drama outside, the outdoor environments add the real circumstances. She says that it stimulates the creativity, the children feel freer when they are not in the classroom.

On page 58 there are many thoughts about the cold and the snow. Sophie knew that she was going to do her work in the winter. Did she think about that when she selected the activities? Could it have been easier to do activities better adapted to snow and winter? The snow-problem comes up on page 60 Methodological too.

I hope this can be to some help for you. If I had had more time I would have done it better…

Kristina