

Teaching
Critical Challenges
via
Dramatic **Arts**



Two Curriculum
Units *for* Primary
and Junior Grades

Dr. Laurie Bizero

Artist: Megan Peck, Grade 3, York Region



Artist: Jennifer Prior, "A Night in the Arctic" grade 5, Halton.

Critical challenges via dramatic arts allow Primary and Junior students to approach problems in fresh ways. Students question what they know, do, and believe by exploring past judgements through dramatic arts activities. Dramatic arts allow students to add another layer to the quality of their thinking. Students expand their abilities to define their personal views, consider alternative points of view and assess emerging evidence within the context of a group dramatic arts critical challenge. Infusing critical thinking throughout children's school lives is approached through dramatic arts critical challenges.

The critical challenges begin with a critical question or critical task that children explore. Each critical challenge in dramatic arts has key teaching components.

An overview describes the focal point of the exploration and the key learning activities that students will investigate. Requisite tools provide an inventory of the resources needed to pursue the critical dramatic arts challenge. Suggested activities describe the components of the dramatic arts lesson's introduction and its approach to the requisite tools. Authentic assessment criteria and procedures are described in the evaluation component of each dramatic arts challenge. Extensions provide a broader lens to increase the integrated nature of primary programs. References are provided when referred to in the critical

dramatic arts challenge. Critical challenges in dramatic arts allow students to raise their voices as competent thinkers.

Meeting Curriculum Expectations

What follows are two units you can use with your class immediately. The activities speak specifically to reasoning, communication and organization of ideas as outlined in the Language, Grades 1-8 curriculum:

- Within "Writing" the units speak to reasoning.
- Within "Reading" the units align with critical thinking.
- Within "Oral and Visual Communication" the units work very well in all four areas of the specific expectations, as outlined on page 40 of the Language document.

The units also work well with the Arts curriculum, depending on the exact way the instruction is approached and the specific expectations the teacher wishes to assess using Drama and Dance.

Teaching through critical challenges, as outlined in these model units, can also work with Mathematics, Health and Physical Education and Science and Technology, depending on the grade and the specific expectation the teacher wishes to teach using a critical challenge approach.

Professional Relations Services

Fall 2000

ETFO staff in Professional Relations Services is available to provide information, advice, support and intervention for members who are experiencing professional difficulties that are not covered by the provisions of the collective agreement.

This service is confidential, and no action will be taken by PRS staff without the member's permission. As well, neither the member's name nor any details of a call are revealed to anyone without the permission of the member.

Local presidents and workplace stewards are encouraged to contact PRS staff at the provincial office when assistance is needed to advise and support members.

<p>PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS SERVICES STAFF WILL ADVISE YOU OF YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN MATTERS SUCH AS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College of Teachers complaints • competence and performance appraisals • criminal allegations that are related to employment responsibilities • difficulties with students, staff, parents, administration • disciplinary action • Employment Insurance maternity and parental leaves • ethics and professionalism • harassment, sexual discrimination (racial, sexual orientation, etc...) • human rights issues • long term disability • negligence • resignation and termination • stress and sick leave • Workplace Safety and Insurance Board 	<p>the profession and governing the conduct of its members, including teachers, principals and most supervisory officers.</p> <p>All teacher and occasional teacher members must be registered with the College to be eligible to teach in Ontario. Accordingly, members must pay an annual fee to ensure they remain in "good standing" with the College.</p> <p>If a member fails to maintain active membership in the College, there is a risk of possible suspension of the certificate of qualification.</p> <p>Complaint against you?</p> <p>If you are contacted by the College and advised that a complaint has been made about you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to what the College staff is advising you about the complaint. • Ask questions for clarification if necessary. • <i>Do not</i> make any statement or respond to questions related to the complaint itself. • <i>Contact Professional Relations Services</i> for advice and assistance. 	<p>Contemplating a complaint against a teacher?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members are advised to contact Professional Relations Services <i>before</i> making a complaint to the College about another member of the College • Every member of the Ontario Teachers' Federation is bound by Section 18 (1) (b) of the regulation under the Teaching Profession Act which states that: <p><i>"A member shall, on making an adverse report on another member, furnish him with a written statement of the report at the earliest possible time and not later than three days after making the report."</i></p>
<p>THE ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TEACHERS</p> <p>Under <i>The Ontario College of Teachers Act</i> implemented in 1996, the College is responsible for regulating</p>	<p>CRIMINAL ALLEGATIONS</p> <p>The Federation provides legal assistance to defend members against allegations which are directly related to the member's teaching duties or employment responsibilities.</p> <p>Office hours</p> <p>If you are contacted by the police or the Children's Aid Society (CAS) regarding an allegation of</p>	
<p align="center">Professional Relations Services by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario</p>		

assault or abuse:

1. Do not participate in or consent to an interview.
2. Make no statement to anyone regarding the allegations or charges.
3. Say "I'm willing to co-operate but I am unable to comment until I contact the Federation and legal counsel."
4. Call Professional Relations Services at ETFO at (416-962-3836). Toll free 1-888-838-3836. State that your call is urgent.
5. You will be put in touch with the Professional Relations "on call" counsellor, who will provide the necessary assistance.

"After Hours" Emergency Legal Assistance. What is an emergency?

- Police are on the scene.
- You are facing criminal charges for an alleged criminal offence directly related to the performance of your professional duties.
- You are at risk of being arrested/incarcerated.

What to do?

Call: 1-888-838-3836 or (416) 962-3836.

After Hours: A voice message will provide the necessary instructions to put you through to an operator. You will be asked a few quick questions. Where appropriate, a criminal lawyer will be contacted and you will be connected immediately.

Legal Support re: Criminal/Civil charges against ETFO Members:

It is the policy of ETFO to determine legal support to members charged with criminal/civil offences on the following basis:

1. In the event that a member is charged with a criminal/civil offence(s) related to the member's employment responsibilities, ETFO shall consider requests for continued legal support through the Legal Approvals Committee.
2. To qualify for consideration the following criteria must be met:

- a) Circumstances must arise from employment responsibilities.
 - b) Member must deny allegation.
3. When legal support is granted restrictions on the level of support may be specified.

Appeal of conviction

4. As a general policy, ETFO does not provide legal or financial support for an appeal of a conviction unless there exist both significant errors in law and significant evidence of innocence arising from the trial which may lead to an acquittal at a retrial.
5. Each request for support of an appeal of a conviction is considered on a case-by-case basis.

Legal Approvals Committee

Five members of the provincial Executive are appointed to the Legal Approvals Committee. The Committee meets monthly for purposes of determining whether or not and to what degree the Federation will pay for legal services to members on a variety of work-related professional matters.

Legal Approvals Appeal Committee

The Legal Approvals Appeal Committee is comprised of the President, First Vice-President, and two Vice-Presidents.

A member has the right to appeal to the Legal Approvals Appeal Committee the decision of the Legal Approvals Committee that a professional relations matter will not be supported by ETFO.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

All boards have written policies and procedures regarding performance evaluation. It is imperative that you be aware of the requirements within your board for you and the principal during the evaluation process. Most procedures require that a pre-consultation conference occur so that you and the principal can discuss the evaluation

process and establish dates and times for a series of observations.

Following the observation visits, a post-observation conference is usually arranged to discuss the evaluator's observations, to clarify information and/or answer questions. Many evaluators will provide a draft copy of the evaluation report for discussion and possible revision prior to the finalized version.

If you are not in agreement with the final report, and if the evaluator is unwilling to change the report, you may attach a response that focuses on areas of the report that you believe misrepresent your program or efforts, omissions in the report, or concerns about the process of evaluation. You may wish to contact Professional Relations Services for assistance with your response.

Your signature on an evaluation only acknowledges that you have read and received the report. It *does not* constitute agreement with the content of the report.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COURSE

This course is provided each year to assist teachers who are experiencing serious difficulty in program planning, assessment and classroom management. Participants are members who have contacted PRS for support and assistance during the school year. If members have received a series of poor evaluations or are under review, they should contact PRS and inquire about the suitability of this course.

HARASSMENT

The *Ontario Human Rights Code* provides that an employee has the right to freedom from harassment in the workplace regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or

handicap. In addition, many boards have adopted anti-harassment policies. Members should familiarize themselves with the board policy as well as the statutory prohibition against harassment. This will ensure, in so far as possible, that their conduct will not create circumstances in which allegations of harassment are made against them and that members understand their rights in the event that they become "victims" of harassment. Members who are involved in harassment complaints should contact Professional Relations Services at ETFO as soon as possible in order to obtain assistance and advice in pursuing or resolving the matter. Discussions with PRS staff are confidential, and no action will be taken on behalf of the member without the member's permission.

LONG TERM DISABILITY

Long Term Disability (LTD) coverage is available to members through group insurance benefits negotiated into your local collective agreement. This benefit is meant as an income replacement plan and protects your pension plan contributions in the event of an illness or injury that extends beyond your sick leave protection.

Members must meet the terms of the LTD contract to qualify for benefits. If you need to file a claim or are having difficulty getting your claim accepted, your Local president or school board personnel will be able to assist you. If you are insured with the Ontario Teachers' Insurance Plan (OTIP), staff at OTIP can also assist you with your claim. ETFO staff may become involved when an appeal of a denied claim has been turned down. Specific procedures have been established which outline the type of assistance that may be provided when the Provincial Office becomes involved in a claim.

If You Are in Receipt of Long-Term Disability Benefits

A member will remain on long-term disability benefits for as long as the insurer determines that the medical evidence provided meets the definition of disability in the LTD policy.

A member must also be under the care and treatment of a doctor who specializes in the area of their illness.

LTD carriers usually have the right under group policies to request that members attend independent medical assessments from time to time. This is frequently to determine whether the member's medical condition is such that ongoing benefits should be continued. Non-cooperation with this provision of the LTD policy could result in benefits being terminated or denied.

Most often, members are expected to sign medical releases so that their doctors or health care professionals may provide information about their disability and health status to the insurance carrier. It is important, though, to read and understand the extent of the consent forms before signing them. In particular, it is important to ensure that the consents fall only within the scope of information required under the insurance contract and do not delve more broadly into areas of the member's personal or professional life not addressed under the insurance contract. For example, sometimes requests for access to information about a member's employment or professional status may be inappropriate and outside the scope of the insurance contract. Members are advised to contact their Local or Provincial Federation before signing consent to release forms not specifically limited to doctors and a member's illness or disability.

It is imperative that members on LTD maintain active membership in the Ontario College of Teachers.

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD

If you are injured at work you are entitled to make a claim to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) for wage loss compensation and/or health care expenses. The WSIB has full authority for determining if a person qualifies for benefits. It is recommended that members file a claim with the WSIB for a work-related injury or illness. Members should never use sick leave days instead of filing a WSIB claim.

Not only will this jeopardize any future rights the injured member has under the WSIB rules but recurrent problems associated with the original injury or illness can never be compensated for.

The early and safe return to work is a priority for the WSIB. When a workplace accident or illness occurs, the parties are required to work together to achieve the member's early and safe return to appropriate employment. Full recovery is not always necessary if the work being returned to is safe and within the worker's functional abilities as outlined by the member's doctor or health care professional. The employer is responsible for identifying and arranging appropriate employment for the member as soon as possible following a workplace accident or illness. An injured member who refuses to participate in this process, or who refuses to accept an employer's offer of an accommodated return to work placement may have his or her WSIB benefits terminated. Communication between the member and the school board is essential to the success of this process.

ETFO has established procedures for assisting members with WSIB claims. Further information about this process may be obtained from the ETFO *Stewards' Handbook* in your school or you may call the Provincial ETFO for an outline of the type of assistance that may be provided.

PUBLICATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

PRS staff provide ongoing assistance to local presidents, workshops for stewards, and other professional development opportunities for members.

The prevention of professional difficulties is a major objective of ETFO. With this objective in mind PRS staff publish articles in regular ETFO publications such as the *ETFO Voice* and *ETFO Link*. Our two most recent publications are:

1. Parent-Teacher Relationships – Putting the Pieces Together

This resource book provides information on a variety of topics and issues related to teachers' interactions with parents, including:

- establishing positive relationships
- managing conflict
- harassment
- defamation
- complaints to administration and/or the College of Teachers
- allegations of assault and abuse

2. After the Chalk Dust Settles

This book was written to assist teachers in recognizing the importance of maintaining a healthy balance and establishing a sense of wellness. In particular, the book looks at how teachers can reduce stress and achieve overall wellness by learning strategies to:

- cope with change
- increase personal well-being
- establish a balance between work and home
- manage conflict more effectively
- communicate better
- promote positive attitude
- maintain professionalism

These publications are available at ShopETFO. Contact your local president or steward for more information.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ETFO MEMBERS

All members of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) should be aware of their responsibilities as members of the Federation. These include the following:

Article VI: Code of Professional Conduct

A member shall:

- 6.1 recognize the Federation as the official voice of all the Active Members of the Federation;
- 6.2 adhere to the Constitution and By-laws of the Federation;
- 6.3 support collective bargaining initiatives including a strike authorized by the Executive
- 6.4 refrain from undertaking or supporting actions which undermine established bargaining procedures;
- 6.5 honour the terms of the collective agreement;
- 6.6 strive to eliminate all forms of harassment between individuals in the educational system;
- 6.7 endeavour to ensure equity and inclusiveness in the workplace;
- 6.8 strive to achieve and maintain a high degree of professionalism and to uphold the honour, dignity, and ethical standards of the teaching profession.

Article VII Disciplinary Procedures

- 7.1 A complaint alleging violation of the Code of Professional Conduct shall be submitted by a member, in writing, to the General Secretary of the Federation;
- 7.2 The complaint shall state the facts and shall indicate that a copy has been provided to the member about whom the complaint has been lodged;
- 7.3 The General Secretary shall investigate the complaint and report with recommendations to the Professional Relations Committee;

- 7.4 The Professional Relations Committee shall consider complaints referred to the Committee by the General Secretary and report with recommendations to the Executive;
- 7.5 The Executive shall determine the discipline to be enacted;
- 7.6 The principles of natural justice shall be followed in the disciplinary proceedings;
- 7.7 Members deemed to be in non-support during a job action may be subject to disciplinary procedures that include the possibility of a monetary fine of up to \$500 per day.

The range of possible sanctions for ETFO members found in breach of Federation policy

- The name of a member in breach of policy to be published in a Federation publication;
- The right to hold office in the Federation to be suspended for a period of years;
- All services normally provided by the Federation to be suspended for a period of years;
- Federation dues to continue to be collected from the Member in breach of policy.

Source: ETFO Constitution and Bylaws 1999



For advice or assistance in any of these areas, contact Professional Relations Services as soon as possible at (416) 962-3836 or toll-free: 1-888-838-3836. All information shared by a member with Professional Relations Services Staff is confidential.

Unit One BEAR HABITAT

Critical task

Design a desirable home for a type of bear of your choice: black, polar, grizzly, panda.

Overview

After researching various bears through films, books, the Internet and discussions, students work together to define the features of an appropriate bear habitat. Students use the criteria they chose to design a home for the type of bear they have chosen.

Requisite Tools

- 1) Background knowledge: habitat needs of various bears.
- 2) Criteria for judgement: features of a good home for a particular type of bear.
- 3) Critical thinking vocabulary: evidence
- 4) Thinking strategies: information webbing; role-play of solutions.
- 5) Habits of mind: inquiring or critical attitude.

Suggested Activities

- Ask students what they know about bear habitats.
- In the whole class grouping, brainstorm bear habitats to create a web from the initial brainstorm. Remind students that a web is a method for recording information and that it can be expanded throughout the activity.
- Read *A Book of Fun from Paddington* by Michael Bond. Read other books about bears that the students have already enjoyed in their Bear Unit (see Overview). Use the books to augment the web of ideas listing the features of a good bear home.
- Engage the children in a documentary or video about authentic bear habitats. Ask pairs of students to observe: how bears move in their homes; how bears communicate with others in their homes; how bears rest in their homes. At the end of the video, add to the web of bear home ideas.
- Revisit the web, assisting the class to develop a set of criteria for a good bear home. List student responses on a class chart.
- Develop a new version of this story with the students. Read the class version as a big book, involving students with the text. Ask students if they would like to be the bear in this home. Ask students what would and wouldn't be the desirable characteristics of this home.

- Define the critical task to the class: Design a home for bear types of your choice, imagining you are a bear of the type chosen.
- Ask students to share and critically review each other's designs in light of the criteria of a good bear home.
- Ask students to demonstrate their ability to live in their designated home as their chosen type of bear.

Evaluation

- While students are formulating their habitat, observe them to see if they demonstrate an inquiring and critical attitude to the task.
- Do students formulate questions about types of bears and their habitats?
- Do students strive to learn more about their chosen bear types and their habitat needs?
- Do students demonstrate the criteria for good bear homes?
- Do students know how they would use their homes if they were the bear they have chosen?

Extension

- The students take an in-class tour around the world highlighting bear types and their habitats. Each student moves in his or her habitat demonstrating its suitability.
- Students move as bears to neighbouring class bear habitats. Students use body language and sounds to develop a bear language. New groupings could develop new bear species and the subsequent need for new bear homes.
- Students are videotaped in their new blended homes. Reviewing the tapes enables new discussion about the suitability of the new homes.
- Students communicate through audio tapes to share their views on their habitats. Tapes are reviewed for consistency and suitability.
- Photographs are taken of students in their blended environment. Students view other works and critically reflect on similarities in appropriate habitats. Differences are evaluated in light of the original habitat criteria.

References

- *A Book of Fun from Paddington* by Michael Bond.
- Class big book version of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.
- Individual copies of bear books, poems and playlets.

Unit Two SHARING PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Critical Question

How should personal strengths (gifts) be shared among classmates?

Overview

Based on the book *Swimmy* by Leo Leoni, students explore a situation in which a child feels like an outsider. Students brainstorm varied ways to use their personal strengths to move from outsider to useful group member. Students are encouraged to generate numerous possibilities and then to highlight priorities. Students should know exactly why they have chosen something as a priority. The ideas not chosen as priorities can also be reviewed and/or combined with other ideas when the priorities have been utilized.

Requisite Tools

- 1) Background knowledge – knowledge of being the outsider; knowledge of helping the group through utilizing personal strengths.
- 2) Criteria for judgment – qualities of self that assist a group; qualities of an inviting or personable group.
- 3) Critical thinking vocabulary – evidence.
- 4) Thinking strategies – webbing; information chart; role-play of solutions.
- 5) Habits of mind – self-esteem; positive self-regard.

Suggested Activities

- Read the book *Swimmy* by Leo Leoni. Ask students what feelings the book brings out, what the book reminds them about teamwork. Explore *Swimmy's* feeling with the students.
- Ask students to brainstorm their initial response to develop ideas for using personal attributes to assist a group. Use this chart to form a web as a visual cue of their responses.
- Develop a chart, with four columns. Ask students to move their ideas into the four columns. (See chart A.)
- Students should give reasons for inferring that their solution is the best by referring to the characteristics of a good group member generated by the class.

CHART A

Ways to be a good group member

Qualities of a good group member	Qualities I do not have that I would like to have	Qualities I have that I like and that help me	Qualities I have that could help the group

- Review the information and present the critical question: Which of the possible solutions to *Swimmy's* social problem best reflect the characteristics of a good group member?
- Ask students to role-play in groups varying the solutions they generate.
- Ask students to join with another group to find similarities and role-play their blended/new solutions.
- Continue blending the role-play groups until the class is one group.
- Ask students to add movement levels and sound to their locomotion as a unit.
- Videotape the class in this form. Take a Polaroid photograph of their new formation. Compare this picture to their yearly school class picture. Discuss the differences about the qualities of a good group member in both photographs.

Evaluation

Assess how well students demonstrated their ability to match their choices to the qualities of an effective group member.

Extension

- Ask students to add coloured scarves to their movements as one large class fish. Ask students to collectively decide why scarves are or are not noticed.
- Ask students to regroup and change positions in the structure while maintaining one class fish.
- Ask students to draw a representation of their scarf as a scale on the fish with pastel crayons. Ask students to experiment with the placement of the pastel scales until the class fish is formulated.

References

Swimmy by Leo Leoni.

Dr. Laurie Bizero is an Assistant Professor in the University of Windsor's Faculty of Education. Previously, she served as an elementary school principal and has taught all grades – kindergarten to grade 8. She has also served as a principal in the secondary panel.