

JUN 21 1994

ROLE-PLAYING  
as  
AN AID TO EDUCATION

AN ABSTRACT  
OF  
A THESIS  
PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
OF DANBURY STATE COLLEGE

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTER OF SCIENCE

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June 1963

Educators are constantly searching for better methods or techniques to advance education. Thus teachers provide vivid examples, personal experiences, encourage a feeling of empathy with people of other cultures as well as of our own, and in general attempt to develop clear concepts of society. The technique of role-playing in itself may well fulfill many of these educational intentions in addition to proving adaptable to a variety of subjects and age groups. Why is it, then, that role-playing has not been in greater use in the classroom?

The writer set out to survey the available literature on role-playing over the past ten years in an effort to discover the advantages and disadvantages of the technique and to arrive at some conclusions concerning its use. Both the educational and medical fields were surveyed.

Dramatizing, as seen from children's play, seems to come naturally.

Role-playing has been used in elementary, secondary, collegiate and adult education programs as well as in community organizations, business and industry. It has been applied in a variety of subjects such as: social problems, sociology, history, biology, general science, hygiene, chemistry, safety, and health education to mention a few.

The risks of role-playing involve such factors as unscrupulous people, misuse of the technique in individual problems, the self-exposure of children, the sensitivity of

minority groups, guilt feelings and most critical of all, the lack of teacher preparation to use role-playing.

The benefits of role-playing embrace individual participation in the group process, learning by experience, insights acquired, value in the variety of reactions to a given situation and great adaptability in subject matter. It can and has been used with any age group from kindergarten on. And a properly conducted role-play session is a stimulating experience for all concerned, as the writer can attest.

Nearly all the risks can be eliminated or at least limited by the proper training of the director or teacher. Because the benefits are so desirable, the possibilities of application so many and varied and because role-playing is effective with such a wide range of age groups, the writer has concluded that role-playing would be a valuable classroom technique and would advocate the inclusion of training courses in the conduct of role-play in our teacher-preparation institutions. Given this opportunity role-playing might then become a definite aid to education.