

Annotation – Chapter 6 - Stimuli

"Dance should not close children in but lead them out in many different directions; some of these directions will be found in together exploring stimuli."

Reading:

Boorman, J. (1971). *Creative Dance in Grades Four to Six. Chapter Six: Stimuli.* (1st ed., pp. 137-161). Ontario: Longman Canada Limited.

Issue/Focus:

In this chapter Boorman discusses many of the different stimuli that can lead to the development of a creative dance. Specifically, she talks about Natural Phenomena, verse, characterization (animals, people, gods, fables), music and tactile objects as stimuli. She also spends a lot of time in each section discussion how these things can be developed into a whole creative dance and presentation - outlining the order in which and groupings you would have students use to create the dance. This chapter was very prescriptive - in that it tells a teacher exactly how to use a variety of stimuli to spark children into the mode of creative dance. Also, she points out several times, that as a teacher you **MUST** find stimuli that are open and full of movement potential - often an idea that seems good in the begin like a tree growing, or mimicking a deer are too narrow for children to explore fully. Instead you would focus on the movement qualities of a deer and mimicking those.

Reasoning:

The reasoning that Boorman uses in this chapter is experience. All of her lesson ideas have been taught to actual children and she has personally witnessed their success. She gives us these activities with proof that they work in the classroom. In the music section of this chapter she suggests a list of music and then gives examples of what could be done with them - again, all things that have been proven effective with children. I think the most effective reasoning for such a practical chapter as this is that it has been tested and found to work in the classroom.

Assumptions:

I found that she made some assumptions about the level of the students and their abilities to participate in creative dance activities by grades 4-6. Some of these activities may be too complex or even risky for students in these grades with no experience with creative dance. She does suggest some ideas in an earlier chapter to deal with this - which will be interesting to hear about. The other assumptions that Boorman makes is that the students will have knowledge about the stimuli presented - as I have very little knowledge about primitive gods and spirits, I am sure children will have less and may have a hard time following these particular lessons.

Conclusion:

Using stimuli to develop children's creative movement is an effective way to open them up to the many movement possibilities that exist. Stimuli are meant to open the creativity and lead the students on in a variety of directions - if your stimuli does not do this then it may be that the stimuli choice selected by the teacher needs to be re-evaluated.

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Significant Information:

- ☆ "the term stimuli...relates to verse, story, legend, natural phenomena, topical and historical events, tactile objects, realistic and fantastic ideas, which can be given creative form in dance" (137)
- ☆ stimuli selected should be worthy of having time devoted to them (137)
- ☆ stimuli should be physically/intellectually challenging, comprehensible by students, meaningful to the child, rich in movement potential (137-138)
- ☆ Stimuli must have the potential for at least two of: varied action words and body part use; changes in time, energy and space; different spatial concepts; individual and group work. (138)

Personal Comments:

I enjoyed this chapter because I found it easy to read and follow and very practical for me as a teacher. It was not ridden by theory, but full of ideas, music and potential dances that I could use in my classroom. I found the idea of the use of fables very interesting and full of potential and the example in the chapter of *The Wager of the Wind and the Sun* was quite an intriguing idea. I also felt that the chapter on music was quite useful as a beginning teacher of creative dance because it gave me a starting point of what to select for my creative dances.